# The lady of the manor

Mrs. Sherwood (Mary Martha)

Sally, who was
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ance which touched her adopted parent to the heart. —IV.

Susan Sotheby.

Cheltenham. March 16. 1887.

LAURA.

"At an abrupt turn of a narrow lane, she was suddenly met by Sally, who was carrying a basket on her arm, and who presented a certain negligence in her appearance which touched her adopted parent to the heart."—IV.

THE

# LADY OF THE MANOR

BY

MRS. SHERWOOD, Mary Martha (Butt)

AUTHOR OF "LITTLE HENRY AND HIS BEARER BOOSY,"

ETC. ETC.

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THE

# LADY OF THE MANOR.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Q. What dost thou chiefly learn by these Commandments?

A. I learn two Things: my Duty towards God, and my Duty towards my Neighbour.

Q. What is thy Duty towards God?

A. My Duty towards God is to believe in him, to fear him, and to love him with all my Heart, with all my Mind, with all my Soul, and with all my Strength; to worship him, to give him Thanks, to put my whole Trust in him, to call upon him, to honour his holy Name and his Word, and to serve him truly all the Days of my Life.

THE parties at the manor-house were now become so highly interesting to the young people, that they began to look forwards with apprehension to that period at which there would be an end to these their regular opportunities of instruction. The lady of the manor had reason, however, to hope that she had been made the instrument of real and lasting good to some of her youthful auditors, and she trusted that all of them were more or less benefited by her admonitions. Apart from all religious considerations, she had lately observed in the young people a certain elevation of sentiment and a superiority of manner which they had not before manifested. They were now better able to appreciate that which is truly excellent; they were more freed from a fondness of those very ordinary topics of conversation which, under various modifications, engage the minds of the greater part of the female sex in those societies in which the love of literature has but little influence, and where scriptural knowledge is confined merely to controversial points.

The lady of the manor was fully aware that there are

few societies, or places of education, in England, perhaps in the world, in which the Bible is used as a source of instruction in all those branches of knowledge in which it may be legitimately employed: for the Bible is an exhaustless treasury of the best materials for general intellectual improvement; it is full of poetical beauties, correct and perfect outlines of history, views of future glory, curious notices of ancient manners, and pure and wise maxims; moreover, it possesses a language of types and shadows which cannot be understood without a correct knowledge of many of the finest works of nature and of art. The books of history and prophecy contained in the Holy Scriptures, if properly unfolded to the reader, are calculated (as the lady of the manor was fully aware) to present such views of past, present, and future periods, such an horizon, so perfect, and so correct, in the still lengthening distance, of all that has passed from the beginning of time, and such prospects of future glory stretching in misty splendour beyond the limits of temporal duration into the boundless expanse of eternity, as all the accumulated mass of human learning might pretend to in vain. Such a whole, in short, does the Bible present, as must necessarily expand the mind in its attempts to comprehend it, and though it may be but imperfectly conceived, still it must have a powerful tendency to preserve the mental faculties from resting too minutely on present things, and being unduly occupied by the various nothings which continually press upon the senses.

It had therefore been the object of the lady of the manor, in all her instructions, to present extended and useful views of every kind to her young people, to teach them to look beyond the immediate scenes which surrounded them, and to raise them above that kind of impertinent curiosity, which prompts so many uncultivated persons to occupy themselves with the concerns of their neighbours: and if she had failed, in some degree, in accomplishing all of her views, she had at least succeeded in this,—that she had been enabled to convince many of her young people of the degradation of character which is the invariable consequence of a gossiping spirit.

The young ladies had gone through the review of the commandments in general with the lady of the manor:

and as it was now necessary to proceed to other parts of the Church Catechism, the next time that the little party met at the manor-house, the lady requested one of her young friends to repeat that fine summary of our duty towards God which immediately follows the commandments; she herself having first proposed the question,—"What is thy duty towards God?"

"My duty towards God," replied one of the young ladies, "is to believe in him, to fear him, and to love him with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength; to worship him, to give him thanks, to put my whole trust in him, to call upon him, to honour his holy name and his word, and to serve him truly all the days of my life."

"In your review of the Commandments, Miss Emmeline," enquired the lady of the manor, "what judgment have you passed on yourselves? You are acquainted with the sentiments of your companions! do you stand condemned by the law? or do you plead 'Not guilty?'"

"We all confess ourselves guilty, and that we are condemned by the law," replied Miss Emmeline, "one and all of us. This is our general and unreserved opinion. By the Commandments we are all worthy of death; but you, Madam, have led us also to understand, that, although by the law we must perish, if confiding in ourselves, yet that, in our state as members of Christ, (supposing us to be such,) we are justified by the same law, inasmuch as we have obeyed it in the person of our spiritual Head, and, therefore, that same attribute of divine justice, by which we were originally condemned, becomes, at the moment that we are made one in Christ, and are thus constituted the partakers of his righteousness, a security for our justification."

"You have stated the doctrine correctly," replied the lady of the manor, "for if divine justice has accepted the righteousness of Christ, as an atonement for the sins of the believer, that justice is bound by its own perfections to deliver this believer from the eternal punishment of his sins. We have, therefore, now nothing more to do with the law that was delivered on Mount Sinai, than to regard it as a rule of life, and as an indication of the divine will in certain points; for if this law continued in its original force, and if all who do not keep it

are condemned, I ask you, 'Wherefore do we not at least attempt to observe the Sabbath?'"

"But do we not attempt to keep the Sabbath, Ma'am?" asked one of the young ladies.

"Certainly not," returned the lady of the manor; "the Sabbath is not the day that is now appointed by our Church to be regarded as sacred: the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week, and not the first. The day which is now observed by us is the Lord's-day; and though we honour it nearly as the Sabbath was regarded under the old covenant, yet it is not the original Sabbath; and, therefore, if we do not believe that the law delivered from Mount Sinai is done away with, I repeat, 'Why don't you keep the Sabbath?'"

"But if we inculcate this opinion, that is, of the abrogation of the moral law that was delivered from Mount Sinai, Madam," said Miss Emmeline, modestly, "might it not lead to licentiousness?"

"No, my dear young lady," replied her amiable instructress, "and that for two reasons: the first, which is a very plain one, being, that the same person who fulfilled the law delivered on Mount Sinai, and who annulled its penalties, renewed every moral obligation enforced therein, though he did not renew the positive institution of the original Sabbath: for what, I ask you, were his words on these subjects?—*Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.* (Matt. v. 17, 18.) And again: *He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: And he that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.* (John xiv. 21, 24.) And my second reason is this, that it is actually impossible for a member of Christ to live in habitual sin: either he is not a member of Christ, or he cannot love sin. A good branch inserted into a bad stock cannot produce the same fruit as the stock into which it has been grafted. A gardener would smile at such a supposition. The lower branches of the old stock may indeed rise up from beneath the graff, but the nature of the good branch must still continue unaltered,

and *peculiarly its own;* and it is the business of the careful gardener to cut off these inferior sprouts and cast them in the dust."

The young lady looked meditatingly, and then said, "One thing I hope, and that is, that what I have learned in this house may abide by me, and continue to supply me with matter of reflection through my life; at present, however, I fear that what I have heard has not taken such hold of my mind as it ought to do. If indeed the good branch has been grafted in my heart, which I much fear is not the case, the lower branches in the old stock have not yet been pruned; or if pruned, they are now, alas! putting forth again, and expanding themselves in leaves and blossoms."

The young ladies, together with the lady of the manor, now proceeded to the more especial concerns of the evening; and the latter expressed herself to the following purpose:—

"As the nature and attributes of God have constituted the subject of a previous discourse, I shall not now enter upon these points in as particular a manner as I formerly did, but shall content myself with reading to you, my dear young people, a short history, bearing a close connexion with that part of the Catechism which is to form the subject of our meditation this day.

"In this story, the horrible effects of infidel principles, and a departure from God, are pointed out in a manner particularly striking; the narrative being composed of facts, and describing scenes which are replete with inconceivable horror, but many of which must be acknowledged to be too descriptive of real life by those who have lately visited the countries in which these events are said to have taken place."

The lady of the manor then opened her manuscript, and proceeded to read.

## LA MORGUE.

Victor Louis, Comte de V——, was the representative of an ancient family, whose estates lay in the south of France. This young man spent his youth in the court of Louis the Sixteenth, and having married early, at the time of the breaking out of the French revolution, he

found himself a widower, with one son of about four years of age.

When the troubles first began to agitate the capital, he withdrew from Paris to his own estates, situated, as we have just observed, in the south of France; and there he resided till the state of public affairs became such, that, in order to preserve his life, and that of his son and orphan niece, of whom he had the care, he was compelled to fly into Germany, where he continued till the reign of terror was past, and till he was enabled, with tolerable security, to return to his country.

We have spoken of a niece of the Comte de V——. This young lady, whose name was Virginie, was the daughter of a younger brother of the Comte, and she had been left, together with her brother, under the guardianship of her uncle, in consequence of the deaths of her parents. By this arrangement, she had been the companion of her uncle's flight, had continued with him during his absence from his native country, and had also returned with him when he came back to France.

The brother of Virginie, though he was placed, equally with herself, under his uncle's guardianship, was, however, owing to certain circumstances, separated from the rest of the family at the moment of their flight, and he, in consequence, remained a stranger to them for many years.

At the period when the Comte found it necessary to make his escape, Clermont (his nephew) was on a visit to a great aunt, whose estate lay in a northern province of France. She was an old and infirm person; but as her family was noble, she was suspected of encouraging aristocratic principles; and her safety, therefore, being threatened, she contrived to escape in disguise to the Low Country, and from thence into Holland, where she procured a passage to England, and arrived in that happy country with her nephew, being possessed only of a little money and some old family jewels.

Madame de Rosemont, the aunt of Clermont, had long been afflicted with rheumatic disorders. On her reaching England, she was, therefore, recommended to proceed to Bath, whither she went, and, on her arrival, hired a single apartment in a lodging-house, and endeavoured to accommodate her habits as much as possible to her circumstances.

In this situation, Clermont, then between five and six years of age, was her only companion, and she was much indebted to his attentions for the few remaining consolations which she enjoyed. He was an interesting boy in person, gentle and courteous in his deportment, and still appearing with the air of a gentleman's child, although his clothes were threadbare, and he wore no stockings.

It pleased Him in whom the fatherless find mercy, that there should at that time be an old gentleman of independent fortune residing in the same house with Madame de Rosemont at Bath. The kind and dutiful attentions of the little stranger to his infirm relative at first excited the pity of this gentleman, whose name was Charlton; and as his love and pity were continually augmented by all that he observed of this little foreigner, he at length resolved, for the sake of this child, to cultivate an acquaintance with Madame de Rosemont, and to offer her any assistance which her situation might require.

Madame de Rosemont, was very grateful for the kind attentions of Mr. Charlton; but, with a nobleness of spirit which we have not unfrequently had proof of in persons of her nation, she seemed more anxious to interest the kind stranger in the behalf of her little nephew, than to obtain from him any relief for her own necessities.

We might here say much upon the gradual growth of mutual affection which took place between Mr. Charlton and little Clermont; but perhaps the nature of feelings of this kind is better elucidated by the mention of their effects, than by any description which might otherwise be given of them. Suffice it to say, that such was the regard with which the poor orphan had been enabled to inspire Mr. Charlton, that the old gentleman hesitated not, when Madame de Rosemont died, (an event which took place about six months after her arrival in England,) to take this friendless boy under his protection, and, when he left Bath, he carried him with him to his own house, which was situated in a very beautiful district of the county of Berks.

Mr. Charlton was a bachelor; he had made his own fortune, and he had no very near relation. There was, therefore, no person who had a right to call him to account for this whim of adopting the little foreigner, for such many pronounced this measure to be: notwithstand-

ing which, when Mr. Charlton's neighbours beheld the consistent and kind attentions of the good old gentleman to the child, and the pains which he took to educate him in such a manner as might render him a valuable member of society, they became so entirely reconciled to what he had done, that they greatly rejoiced to see the promise of much that was amiable in the little stranger, by which they trusted that the old gentleman would be rewarded for his charitable adoption of him.

Clermont was remarkably quick in the acquirement of knowledge; insomuch that Mr. Charlton, who lived in retirement, found great pleasure in giving him instruction: and to this end he kept the boy constantly with him, he made him the companion of his walks in the fields, his visits to the house of prayer and the habitations of the poor, and his assistant when working in his garden, which was one of his chief amusements.

When the aged are pious, and willing to please and be pleased, they are particularly agreeable to children, and I have often seen a friendship as perfect, and more sweet, existing between a pious old person and a child, than between any other two individuals of whatever circumstances. For between youth and age there is not often much rivalry, and the confidence of the child is sweetly repaid by the protecting tenderness of the old man.

I could also say much of the various methods which Mr. Charlton adopted to improve Clermont, and to render him such a character as he earnestly wished to make him. Mr. Charlton was a decided Christian: it cannot therefore be questioned that he made religion the Alpha and the Omega of his instructions; and, as all the habits of the child were founded upon sound and simple Christian principles, it is fair to infer, that, with the divine blessing, the little stranger was at once humble, courteous, and contented.

Thus Clermont de V—— attained the age of seventeen, under the charge of Mr. Charlton; at which time the worthy old gentleman, who intended to bring him up to one of the liberal professions, (as the young man expressed his desire to make England his place of abode through life,) resolved upon sending him to the University; and, in consequence, he placed him at Oxford, where he remained the usual time: when, having taken

his degree, he returned to his guardian's house, intending to study for orders amidst that sweet retirement where the best and the happiest portion of his life had been spent.

In the mean time, Clermont had heard but little of his relations in France: he had, indeed, been told that his uncle had returned to his country, and that he had been restored to his estates and honours; that his sister was still living under his charge; and that his cousin was grown up, and had distinguished himself on several occasions in the army under the emperor. About the period, however, of which we were speaking, while Clermont was studying at home, after having quitted the University, a captain of an American vessel, who was a particular friend of his uncle, arriving in England, brought a very pressing invitation to the young man from his friends, and engaged that if he would confide himself to his care, he would land him safe in France, and put him in a way to reach his relatives without danger: for, as Clermont was entirely of French extraction, and could speak the language well, and as his friends were at that period in high favour with government, no doubt was entertained of his personal safety both in going and returning.

It was with considerable perturbation that Mr. Charlton heard of this proposal. On many accounts he trembled for the consequences of this journey. As there were, however, certain circumstances (which it would take too much time to enumerate at large) which concurred to render this visit desirable, the good old gentleman yielded to the surrender of his adopted son for a while, though not, as I before said, without considerable uneasiness: not that he was much disturbed respecting the danger which Clermont might personally incur from this journey; but he well knew the infidel character of the persons with whom his ward was about to associate, and he trembled lest the pure principles of his pupil should be corrupted by the evil communications to which he must be exposed.

Many were the earnest and serious conversations which took place between Mr. Charlton and Clermont previous to this journey, one of which I shall endeavour to lay, with some precision, before my reader.

And, first, the venerable instructor discoursed with his pupil on the nature of God, that infinite and incomprehensible Being, the Creator of all things, who preserves and governs every thing by his almighty power and wisdom, and who is the only proper object of our worship; —He who exists of himself, and gives and maintains existence in all others;—He on whom all depend, who is the fountain of happiness, and in separation from whom consists the horrors of eternal death. He next proceeded to expatiate on the nature of faith, which, taken in its most simple form, may be considered as merely a dependence on the veracity of another; and he shewed that this faith, even in this its most simple modification, was exceedingly rare as exercised by man with respect to God, and that the Creator himself was habitually denied that degree of confidence which not unfrequently subsists between man and man.

"*He that cometh to God,*" said Mr. Charlton, "*must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* (Heb. xi. 6.) A man who has this assurance," continued the old gentleman, "must necessarily, though he may be no further enlightened, possess the fear of God: for, as man loves rewards, and dreads punishment, he would naturally fear him who, he is habitually persuaded, is both able and willing to punish the guilty; and thus the fear of God will become the beginning of wisdom—examples of which have been observed in persons living in heathen nations, and though these examples are rare and imperfect, yet are they sufficient to prove the truth of St. Paul's words—*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.* (Rom. i. 18—20.)

"Thus you see," continued Mr. Charlton, "that man, without any further light than that of nature, ought to entertain such fear of God, as would restrain him from that ungodliness and unrighteousness against which the wrath of the Creator is revealed.

"But in the country to which you are about to go, my son," continued the good old gentleman, "you will not only meet with those who speak of the Christian system as a late invention, the fabrication of priestcraft, but you will come into contact with persons who are atheists both in deed and in word—persons who defy the authority of God, despise his laws, and even question his existence; and thus deprive themselves of all that comfort and support without which the creature either must cease to exist, or if, from the immortality of his nature, he continues to exist, his being is prolonged like that of the fallen angels, in blackness, darkness, and despair.

"You remember the period, my son," continued Mr. Charlton, "before you left me to mix with the world in the place where you have spent the last few years of your life; and you may recollect, yes, and you surely will ever recollect with pleasure, the calm and delicious manner in which our lives at that time passed away. How you then rejoiced in my society! how you regretted the least separation from me! and how often you expressed yourself as unable even to enjoy your amusements in my absence! You did not then deceive me, Clermont! you surely felt all that you then expressed! I never questioned your sincerity!"

"No, no, my father," said the young man, his dark eyes suddenly becoming suffused with tears, and his cheeks flushing at the question, "I did not deceive you. The happiest days that I ever spent, or ever shall spend on earth, were when I lived with you, and with you only; when I knew nothing of the world, and you were my only friend."

"Enough, my son," said Mr. Charlton. "It was not because I doubted your sincerity that I put the question, but in order to elucidate my argument. A father stands with respect to a child, and during the years of childhood, in the place of God.—Man, at best, must be a poor, a very poor representative of the heavenly Parent; nevertheless, the authority and influence of the person who has the exclusive control of a child are such, that they afford the only image which can be found on earth of the paternal care of God towards his creatures: and that sense of bereavement and helplessness which a child feels in the absence of a tender, wise, and watchful pa-

rent, may perhaps furnish the most striking emblem of the state of a rational creature spiritually absent from the Creator. A child, whether ill or well disposed, must experience a sense of bereavement in the loss of a good parent; and I have often remarked the pathetic manner in which an orphan child seems to seek, among strangers, from some elder person, those tender sympathies of which he was deprived by the loss of his parents. How, though untaught, does such a one apply the tender name of parent to the first person who shews him particular kindness! and how do paternal and filial affections grow in the hearts of persons who by birth are strangers to the realities of these endearing characters!

"A well-disposed and affectionate child," continued Mr. Charlton, "deplores his father's absence, weeps and laments the loss, and, if he falls into error for want of his usual support, is restless, uneasy, and dissatisfied under the fall. But the insubordinate son at first rejoices in the removal of the restraint, and instantly sets about to plan his own happiness, and to execute the desires of his evil heart, for a while triumphing in his liberty; till at length his lusts become his master, his punishment overtakes him, and, in his agony, he is ready to curse the cause by which the salutary restraint was removed.

"Thus, in both cases, the happiness of the child, humanly speaking, depends on the parent; and, in like manner, the true advantage and happiness of man wholly depends on his Creator, and nothing more nor less than the absence of God is requisite to make a hell.

"While the sinner, however vile, is still under the dealings of the Almighty, severe as may be his trials, and repeated as may be his chastisements, there is hope for him, and he cannot yet be said to be truly miserable. But when the Lord ceases to deal with man any longer, when he leaves him to himself, then his hell begins; and if we had any faculty by which we could distinguish those who are forsaken of the Lord, though still living on earth, from those persons with whom the Lord is dealing in mercy, we should discover that the torments of hell had already begun in the breasts of the former, and that the misery of the damned was commencing within them, though outwardly perhaps they might ap-

pear to be possessing every thing with which this world could supply them. These are the persons of whom the Psalmist thus speaks—*Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword: from men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.* (Psalm xvii. 13, 14.)

"There is a simple but a comprehensive and important summary of man's duty to God in the Catechism of the Church of which you are about to become a minister," proceeded Mr. Charlton, "of which you, my dear Clermont, will not think the less from your having been taught to repeat it from an infant. The words, you will remember, are to this effect:—'My duty towards God is to believe in him, to fear him, and to love him with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength; to worship him, to give him thanks, to put my whole trust in him, to call upon him, to honour his holy name and his word, and to serve him truly all the days of my life.'

"The mind of man before the Fall, while he was yet unalienated from his Maker by sin, spontaneously produced every feeling described in this summary, just as the flowers of Eden then sprang without culture from the beautiful and uncursed earth: and when fallen man is again brought near to God through Christ, and has his nature renewed by the influences of the Divine Spirit, he a second time becomes in some degree capable of cherishing all those blessed feelings towards his Maker which Adam felt in his original state; and when he shall finally be rendered victorious in death, the love and service of God will constitute his occupation and happiness through the endless circle of eternity.

"When you, my son, are absent from me," continued Mr. Charlton, "you will remember this conversation, and I trust that it may be a means of guarding you against the delusions of the world. The Continent of Europe, and particularly your own native country, has lately abounded with characters of the most awful impiety, persons who, being full of self-importance, and possessing a high idea of their own intellectual powers, despise the God who made them, and utterly reject the

whole scheme of salvation by Christ. Hence have arisen all the wars, all those scenes of private and public crime, which for some years have agitated your nation; and I fear that you will see, when in France, such effects of this infidelity as at this time you are hardly able to conceive. O my son, entreat that you may be supported in this coming hour of trial. Rely on your God, rest on his strength, pray to be kept close to Him. To Him I devote you: may He be your Father! confide in Him as once you did in me; and let the words of the holy Psalmist form the continued subject of your prayer—*Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.*" (Psalm cxxiii.)

We do not mean to enter minutely into an account of Clermont's separation from Mr. Charlton, or of his short voyage to France. Suffice it to say, that he arrived safely in Paris, from whence, having heard that his uncle and sister were residing at an estate possessed by the former about twenty leagues from the capital, he proceeded to this place without loss of time, and arrived, about noon, at the gates of the château, which was situated at the end of a long avenue of elms and tillenel.

It was summer time. The scene which surrounded him was fine, and not the less imposing from its being totally different from every thing that he had been accustomed to see in England, where every object, however beautifully arranged, however rich and smiling, is on a scale so small, that it seems to convey to the foreign eye the idea of Lilliput or Fairy-Land. On the contrary, the valleys of France are wide, and the elevations, though considerable, are so removed from the eye, that they seem less than they really are. Whole tracts of country appear in almost every prospect covered with forest; from which not unfrequently the white tower of a church alone conspicuously rises, the little villages by which they are commonly encircled being wholly con-

cealed by the surrounding trees, unless, here and there, a pigeon-house and a Gothic turret of more than ordinary elevation, peeping from above the shade, convey the idea of ancient dignity, and suggest imaginations of feudal modes of living which are now no more.

The gates of the château were presently opened to Clermont, whose arrival was about this time expected; and the coachman, smacking his whip with a flourish, (of which persons of this denomination in France only understand the method,) drove up immediately to the great door of the château, the entrance to which was by a high yet ruinous flight of steps. Had not Clermont been already some days in France, he would have augured somewhat unfavourably concerning the finances of the family from the dilapidated and slovenly appearance of every thing visible about the château. But his eye had been by this time so well accustomed to inconsistencies of this kind, that he drew no inauspicious conclusion from certain deficiencies which he observed in the stone parapet on the roof of the house, from the grass and weeds which grew carelessly in the gravel walks, from the want of paint on the numerous window-shutters, and from the total absence of glass in the upper windows of the roof.

As soon as the horses stopped, the young man alighted from his carriage, and having committed his luggage to the charge of a lacquey, whom he had hired at Paris, he was instantly conducted through a large vestibule into an equally spacious saloon, where he found the family party assembled, and presenting a variety of singular groups.

The lady of the château, to wit, the second wife of the Comte de V——, was engaged in playing at chess, before a large open window, with a young officer of the legion d'honneur, the fierceness of whose aspect, strengthened by a pair of large mustachoes, formed a striking contrast with the languishing air of his partner. The Comtesse de V—— was a woman of a certain age, and she therefore owed to her perruquier, her perfumer, (who supplied the various washes for her complexion,) her milliner, and her femme de chambre, that juvenile appearance which she still had in the eyes of those who beheld her only for the first time, and which, added to

a girlish manner, rendered her precisely the figure which every one has depicted to himself of a vain woman who cannot condescend to grow old. A loud and affected laugh from this lady, intermingled with the fashionable oaths of her young adversary, were the first sounds which reached the ears of Clermont, as he entered the door. In another part of this spacious saloon, a cluster of young persons of both sexes were gathered round a harp. And on a sofa, in another window, sat Virginie, the sister of Clermont, a table which stood before her being littered with materials for drawing, with which she seemed to be idly occupied; while, by her side, on the same sofa, lounged her cousin Victor. In a recess, at the further end of the room, was a billiard-table, at which was the comte himself, together with several gentlemen, deeply engaged in the game. In another part of the hall sat a young lady at an easel, employed in drawing the portrait of a stout elderly gentleman, to whom she at the same time paid her court by many artificial smiles and pretty speeches; and round her stood a group of loungers, and probably of flatterers of the elderly gentleman, who proved to be the person of the highest rank and consequence of the party, and one who, having lately become a widower, might be supposed to entertain the view of making a future choice.

The entrance of Clermont, as might be expected, had the effect of breaking up all these separate parties. The strangers rose to look at him, and pay their compliments; and his relations gathered round him, and embraced him with apparent warmth, welcomed him to France, regretted his long absence, and Virginie expressed their hopes that he was now come to finish his days with them.

It was some time, however, before Clermont could be made to understand the variety of new relations which claimed his attention. He had indeed heard that his uncle was married again; but he was astonished and displeased at the gay and juvenile air of his lady. Neither was his sister's appearance, nor that of his cousin Victor, more congenial with his feelings. Virginie, though three years younger than her brother, already had the manner of a female who was well practised in the world, and thoroughly versed in all the arts

by which some women endeavour to attract and secure the attentions of the other sex. Young as she was, she seemed to be indebted to rouge and other fashionable ornaments for the showy appearance which she made; an appearance which to some persons might perhaps be attractive, (for she was naturally beautiful,) but which, to the pure and refined taste of Clermont, was at once revolting and pitiable.

Victor was a handsome young man, having fine dark eyes, and hair which, without giving his valet any trouble, assumed, at pleasure, the most picturesque or modish appearance. His carriage was animated and graceful; and he possessed, together with all the fashionable accomplishments of the day, (such as dancing, fencing, and playing with skill at every game of chance,) a sufficient extent of learning to enable him to appear with credit in any literary company into which he might chance to fall. The first appearance of this young man was not altogether displeasing to Clermont. He hoped that he saw something amiable in him. He was attracted by his easy carriage and his engaging manners. But every moment's increasing acquaintance deducted a little from this good opinion, and he had reason, in a very short time, to look upon him, if not with dread, at least with a degree of apprehension which soon became matured into a fearful certainty.

We have not yet particularly described the Comte de V—— himself, neither was his character so easily discovered as that of his son; for he was reserved, cold, and guarded. Clermont was, however, received by him with sufficient politeness; and the young man felt that his uncle's age, his rank, his situation in life, and his near relationship to his departed father, gave him a title to his respect. He wished also to be able to add esteem to respect; but when any comparison presented itself between this man and Mr. Charlton, it was always so much to the disadvantage of the former, that Clermont could not help continually lifting up his heart in thanksgiving to God for the blessing which had been vouchsafed him in his being placed during the tender years of childhood under the superintendence of Christians. The Comte de V—— was, in fact, an infidel, and a fierce politician, though he had frequently contrived to conceal his princi-

ples, and to adapt his conversation so exactly to the state of the times, that he was now high in favour with government, and had been so through the several late changes and revolutions of the state.

Thus have we described the principal characters that were then met in the château. Besides these were many others, who had come by the invitation of the comte to enjoy the charms of a country situation in the Château de V——; a sort of rural life, of which it is the fashion to speak with enthusiasm in Paris, but which very few Parisians know how to enjoy. As the party were, however, to continue for some weeks in the château, it was necessary that all should seem pleased while they were together. An air of enjoyment was, therefore, assumed by every individual, and the principal hours of each day were filled up by such amusements as the country would afford, or as could by any means be transported from the town. Among the former were riding, archery, promenades (as these persons would term them) upon the water, in carriages and on foot; and, among the latter, were balls, dilletante plays, concerts, and games of chance of every denomination, multiplied and varied with a degree of ingenuity and invention worthy of a better purpose.

But to return to Clermont.—This young man had not been many hours an inmate of the château, before he discovered that his opinions on religious subjects were more directly opposed to those of his relations than he had hoped that, on acquaintance, they would prove. He had, indeed, expected to find his sister a Papist, and his cousin careless alike about all religions; but he had not prepared himself to expect from the mouths of these young persons infidel, if not blasphemous, expressions: and to hear such language uttered with the utmost levity, and in the course of their most ordinary conversation, filled him with a degree of horror which he had no power to conceal, though he desired, in general, to restrain his feelings in such a way as might render his interference the more acceptable and salutary, whenever it might appear most seasonable for him to make known either to his sister or cousin the horror with which these dreadful sentiments inspired him. Other discoveries he presently made, which increased his alarm for his sister. He had been but a very short time in the family before he per-

ceived that Victor and Virginie were distinguished by each other with an especial mutual regard, which, on the part of Virginie, appeared to be very strong, and which, on that of Victor, perhaps was not less sincere, though the extraordinary carelessness and independence of the young man's manner might sometimes have tended to mislead a careless observer. Clermont was not, however, an unconcerned looker-on, but was deeply interested in every thing which related to these his nearest natural connexions.

It was when seated at dinner on the first day of his arrival at the château, in the midst of a gay and brilliant assembly, that Clermont first became acquainted with the sentiments that I have already mentioned. Virginie was seated between himself and Victor, and he, therefore, overheard several little words which were whispered between them, and which induced him to form this opinion. But this discovery, which otherwise might not have displeased him, was, as I before remarked, rendered particularly painful in his estimation by the observations that he was at the same time enabled to make upon the dangerous principles of the young people.

Several weeks had elapsed in the way that I have been describing, during which Clermont vainly attempted to engage the confidence of his sister: though she always appeared to be easy and unreserved with him, yet her manner was at one time the ease of a fashionable woman in the company of strangers, and at another the unreservedness of a playful child. It seemed impossible to prevail on her to enter upon a single serious reflection; and if her brother attempted to reason with her about the impiety of her principles and of her language, she would instantly reply, "But are you not a heretic, brother? and I a Catholic? How then can we expect to agree on these matters?"

It was in vain for him to attempt to explain to her that there were certain points in which a Protestant and Papist might cordially meet, and that open profaneness must be equally unacceptable to the sincere of either party: in consequence of which, if she were actually what she professed to be, she could not allow herself in such impious expressions as she daily indulged.

When thus pressed, she invariably evaded making a

reply by having recourse to some childish or playful subterfuge. On one of these occasions she pretended to have pierced her finger with the thorn of a rose with which she had been playing, and she uttered, in consequence, a thousand pitiful cries, wringing her hands, and pressing her wounded finger, or rather the finger supposed to be wounded, against her lips, in order, as it were, to deaden the pain. On another occasion, she contrived to drop her cashmere as they were walking in the avenue, and managed to entangle her foot so conveniently in it, that the thread of the discourse was entirely lost before every thing was again arranged in its due order.

For a while Clermont was the complete dupe of these tricks, and though he was vexed by these interruptions, which continually occurred in the midst of their most serious conversations, still he was far from attributing them to their real cause. He believed, indeed, that his sister was light and vain, but he did not suppose her designing; and at all events he was too deeply interested in her spiritual welfare, to allow himself to be disheartened by the trifling, though perpetually recurring, difficulties which he had hitherto encountered. He at length, however, formed the resolution to be more close and pressing in his discourse with her than he had ever before been. But now a new obstacle occurred: he found it every day more and more impossible to be alone with her; she continually devised some pretext for avoiding him; and thus it became necessary that he should either speak to her in public or not at all. As her manner was, however, always apparently open and affectionate, he still did not imagine that it was intentionally that she shunned him.

In the mean time, Clermont continually witnessed a mode of life of which he had not previously formed an idea, as he never had read romances, and as nothing of real life in the country where he had been educated approached in the least degree towards what he then habitually saw.

The persons who were at that time assembled in the Château de V—— were such as divided their lives between pleasure and politics: females who made the arts of coquetry their ostensible business, while political

intrigue was the real object of their lives; and men, who, though they pretended to be utterly devoted to gallantry, were secretly absorbed by ambition, and by that alone.

In consequence of these hidden motives of action, there was an apparent inconsistency in the conduct of those by whom he was surrounded which puzzled and astonished Clermont beyond measure. He soon perceived that the duties and obligations of the marriage state were but little regarded either by ladies or gentlemen in the society among which he then resided. But when he saw handsome and fashionable females sacrificing their virtue to old men, and, on the contrary, when he beheld young men who seemed to be devoted to elderly and disagreeable women, he could not help thinking that these persons were sinning without motive, and bartering their reputation and honour without even the shadow of an equivalent: for, as I before said, Clermont had no idea of the secret springs of these persons' conduct.

In the mean time, the love of amusement seemed to have turned every head. No one could rest quietly within the house. Schemes were ever in agitation by which the environs of the château were to be converted into a second Arcadia. Nothing was here spoken of but rural theatres, concerts by moonlight, dances under the shade of trees, and other caprices of the same nature, which might have passed off better, if the parties concerned had possessed but the semblance of that simplicity which they pretended so greatly to admire. But as it was, the highly artificial and corrupt manners, principles, and appearance, which these persons brought with them from Paris, evidently so ill assorted with the really fine natural beauties which they chose for the scenes of their follies, that Clermont was filled at once with disgust, astonishment, and pity, at this excess of human folly, of which he had never before formed any conception.

It was on an occasion of this kind, namely the fête of the Comtesse de V—— which was to be distinguished by a rustic ball beneath the trees, that Clermont had a conversation with his sister and Victor, which led to a fuller explanation of their sentiments on both sides than had hitherto taken place.

On the evening of the fête, the comtesse had ordered a beautiful grove, in the vicinity of the castle, to be set forth with couches, adorned with garlands, and tables furnished with fruits and flowers, with cream and sweetmeats. Here were assembled all the villagers and tenants of the comte, to dance cotillions, while the musicians, placed on a scaffold of considerable height in the centre of the festive groups, regulated the steps of each.

After an early dinner, the ladies and gentlemen of the château repaired to this scene of amusement; and those among them who were still young, or who wished to be thought so, mingled with the peasants, and became companions of the dance.

Clermont accompanied them to the grove, yet he declined dancing, though much solicited so to do; but taking his seat on one of the couches before mentioned, he continued for a length of time contemplating the scene before him. He was situated near the various sets of dancers, where the branches above his head afforded a thick and beautiful canopy, and where a short turf beneath his feet supplied as fair a carpet. To the right and left were groups of dancers, who moved in measure, as the music directed them; and who, though their parties were formed of heterogeneous orders, and persons of various degrees, exhibited, nevertheless, the same agility, dexterity, and we might almost say, the same grace. The peasants wore blue petticoats and white jackets, their hair being neatly drawn under their white caps, and their faces were flushed with health and exercise, and embrowned by constant exposure to the open air; while the ladies of the château, who were fancifully dressed in a kind of rustic habit, owed the bright red, which concealed the more faded colour of their cheeks, to the rouge which no French woman is ashamed of displaying.

Immediately in the front of Clermont's seat was a long vista formed of tillenels, and terminated by a grotto from which gushed a clear stream of water; within the shade of this grotto, and bending over a small dripping rock at its mouth, there was the statue of a naiad: the whole constituting, together with the groups of dancers, and tables enriched with fruits and flowers, such scenes as inexperienced and unrenewed minds no doubt often fancy

to themselves as abounding with every delight. But Clermont, though young, had, by the divine blessing on the excellent education which he had enjoyed, acquired a more correct and elevated mode of thinking and reasoning upon every subject than the untaught and unregenerate mass of his fellow-creatures; and this had happened according to the words of the apostle, who saith, *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* (2 Cor. v. 17.) Consequently, the reflections which occupied Clermont in reference to this scene, and also to that love of pleasure, which, in one form or other, is so remarkable in every order, degree, and description of persons in the French nation, were totally the reverse of those which would have been made by one who continued still ignorant of true religion, and of the nature of the human heart. Clermont was aware that real happiness consisted in an intimate union of heart with the eternal Creator and Father of all human beings; and he was persuaded that without that union every intelligent creature must be miserable, and that all attempts of men to derive happiness from any circumstances independent of God, must not only prove abortive, but must bring with them their own punishment, in the anger of the Almighty, and the consequent darkness of the soul, and confusion and horror of the spirits. He considered the state of man upon earth to be as it is represented in the Scripture of Truth: he regarded him as a fallen creature, as one who by his sins has crucified the Lord of glory; and he felt that, although the Lord Jehovah had encouraged him to look up again after his fall, and had opened unto him the way of salvation, yet that he permits him not to taste any true enjoyment independent of himself. And, indeed, it is in the very nature of things, that he should not, amidst any circumstances, be really happy without God.

The beautiful words of the hymn at this moment presented themselves to Clermont—

> "My God, my life, my love,
> To thee, to thee I call;
> I cannot live, if thou remove,
> For thou art all in all."

And while he yet repeated these words, Victor and Vir-

ginie, who had been together all the afternoon, quitted the dance, and took their seats on a sofa which was placed directly opposite to Clermont. They were both in high spirits, and expressed, by looks which Clermont pretty well understood, their contempt of the manner in which he had withdrawn himself from the lively amusements of the evening. "And so," said Virginie, as she seated herself, "you still continue to act the stoic philosopher, my good brother; but are you aware that we are now in the country, among rude and illiterate persons, who cannot comprehend the merits of this high flight of human wisdom, and who would respect you quite as much for joining in the dance, and appearing cheerful, as for sitting there and affecting superiority to the whole world?"

"At any rate, Mademoiselle," replied Clermont, with good-humour, "you are not inclined to augment my self-love. How often must I repeat in my defence, that I never practised dancing! that I do not understand your *chassés et moulinéts*, and that I should only expose myself to ridicule by attempting them!"

"You have lived in England, Clermont," said Victor, with an expression of contempt, which he scarcely endeavoured to conceal with a smile, "till you have acquired all the insipidity of the English character. You are as cold, my friend, as the November fogs, and as sedate as the old Saxon who brought you up." Then turning to Virginie, taking her hand, and looking at her with an expression of affection which formed a strong contrast with the cold contempt of his manner to her brother, he added, "Had Clermont been brought up with us, my lovely Virginie, in the old château of Bellevue, the glowing sun of Languedoc would perhaps have imparted more warmth to his heart than the cold fogs of the little island have succeeded in doing."

Clermont smiled, and thanked Victor with much good-humour for his kind wish.

Victor took no notice of this reply of Clermont. The mention of Languedoc, where the former had spent many years of the earlier part of his life, in company with Virginie, under the charge of a tutor and governess in an ancient family mansion of the comte, had revived many feelings and recollections of childhood, which for

a few minutes absorbed his whole mind. "Ah, Virginie!" continued the young man, as he leaned over her and held her hand, "Clermont, after all, is to be pitied, for having been separated from us. O, what happy days were those when we were in Languedoc! Do you remember the evenings of the vintage, when we danced under the great elm tree, and when the little good man, Colin, played on his violin, and directed our steps? Do you remember the little peasants Laurette and Adele? and how I offended you, Virginie, because I would dance with them on the evening of the fête of St. Roque?"

"Ah, my cousin!" replied Virginie, gently tapping his arm with a rosebud which she held in her hand, "you ever delighted in giving me pain."

"I ever delighted in the consciousness of not being indifferent to you, my Virginie," replied Victor.

Silence for a moment now followed, while Clermont, looking on the youthful pair before him, could scarcely conceal his feelings of pity; for he was persuaded that they loved each other; but, inasmuch as he also too well knew their principles, he could expect no happiness from such an union of hearts.

The silence was interrupted by Victor, who, as his expressive and fine countenance suddenly changed from grave to gay, exclaimed, "And do you remember, Virginie, our games of Colin Maillard in the great hall? and do you recollect how little Pauline used to shriek when she was caught, and how I was able to discover you from all the rest, though there were twenty others, and though you had blinded my eyes sevenfold?"

"O Victor!" said Virginie, "those were happy days; I wish they could return! O delightful hours of early youth! O happy scenes of thoughtless infancy, now, alas! for ever gone! I should experience more pleasure in beholding once again the two frowning black-and-white gable ends of the old château, which stood forward into the back court where I used to feed my turkeys and guinea-fowls, than in seeing the most sumptuous exhibition of noble architecture which the first palace in Europe could afford."

Victor replied by singing, with considerable pathos, a part of the well-known air called, "La Range des Vaches."

"Quand reverrons dans un jour
Toutes les montagnes d'Alantour."

Both Victor and Virginie appeared much more softened and affected by these remembrances than Clermont had observed them ever to have been before, and seemed to feel so much regret at the departure of those days of childhood, and separation from the world, of which they spoke, that he judged the present to be a fit opportunity for addressing them upon that subject which was ever the nearest his own heart; and he accordingly embraced that season to point out to them that there was much deception in the idea commonly entertained of the happiness of childhood, and of past times in general. "In looking back," said he, "on periods long gone by, we are apt to recollect those circumstances only which were pleasant, and to forget the many little painful events which continually disturb the peace of man on earth." And he affirmed, also, what he felt persuaded to be the case, that man's happiness depended not on any outward circumstances, but on his re-union with God, from whom he is naturally separated by sin. He described the appointed means of this re-union in as few words as possible, and he endeavoured to portray the peaceful, the blessed, the triumphant state of an old Christian, humbly waiting the period when his change should take place; and then he proceeded to draw a parallel between the situation of such a man and that of a child, whose happiness consists in want of reflection, or that of mere men of the world, whose peace must ever be liable to be marred by the fear of death, and by their uncertainty with respect to what must follow it.

Clermont had endeavoured to compress these sentiments in as few words as possible; but while he was speaking, he observed strong marks of impatience in the countenances of his auditors: Virginie looked down, and Victor's features became flushed with anger. At length the young man spoke, and, using an oath too common in the mouths of Frenchmen, told Clermont he was fit company only for an old monk of the Chartreux. Then, arising abruptly, and drawing Virginie after him, he added an expression of a nature so profane, that Clermont, being penetrated with horror, also started from his seat, and, leaving the public situation in which he then was,

retired to a more solitary part of the wood, where, no doubt, he unburdened his soul in an address to that God whom he had been led to desire to love with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength.

Shortly after the period lately spoken of, the family of the Comte de V—— returned to Paris; and Clermont, whose departure for England could not, from certain circumstances, take place for several weeks, was compelled to witness a new mode of life which was even less congenial with his feelings than that which he had seen at the château.

In the country he had indeed enjoyed many opportunities of withdrawing himself at times from society, and of communing with his Maker among the most beautiful works of that glorious God. For although nature had been twisted and tortured in the most cruel manner which could be imagined in the immediate vicinity of the château, where nothing was to be seen but stiff parterres, trim avenues, close bosquets, grottoes, and Chinese bridges, statues of dryads, fawns, and wood-nymphs; yet beyond this region of false taste were many exquisite scenes, where nature, being left at liberty, afforded some idea of what this fine country had once been when it was peopled by its ancient Celtic inhabitants, ere yet the primeval forests had yielded to the axe of the woodcutter, or the extensive lawn had been portioned into small patches for the use of the cottager. But when Clermont became an inmate of the Hotel de V——, in the Faux-bourg St. Honoré, he had no place to which he could withdraw where his ears were not assailed by the noise of this great city.

Those persons who have visited London and Paris must be sensible of striking and peculiar differences in the taste of the inhabitants of these famous capitals. There is a grand and noble simplicity in the plan of the former which must arrest every eye; and, though many parts of London (as of every city inhabited by the sinful race of man) are disfigured by want of cleanliness, and polluted by guilt, nevertheless, the new streets and the superior portions of that metropolis are free from mean and inferior ornaments. In them we find none of that affectation of the *rus in urbe* of which our continental neighbours are so fond, where stunted trees, parched

gravel walks, leafless arbours, and trim parterres, present nature to the eye in the character of Hagar in the desert, about to expire with thirst.

Paris, on the other hand, is an assemblage of tasteless palaces and mean houses, dried and withered gardens, dirty public walks, avenues of black trees, between ranges of little shops and an exceeding variety of ornaments, in bad taste themselves, and appearing with additional deformity from being injudiciously situated.

A totally new scene is, however, always imposing; and when Clermont first visited the gardens of the Tuilleries, which at that time were occupied by the emperor and his royal consort, Maria Louisa, of the house of Austria, his attention was powerfully arrested by the long reach of avenue, extending from the front of the palace, and through its stiff gardens, set forth with innumerable ancient statues, the Place Louis Quinze and the Champs Elyseés, till it was terminated, at a magnificent distance, by the gateway which is situated at the Barrier de l'Etoile.

It is not now my object to enter very particularly into a description of the mode of life that is led by persons of distinction in Paris. Suffice it to say, that at the period we speak of, as in the present time, nothing is less desired in that city than the pleasures of a domestic life. In the house of the Comte de V——, the family never met at breakfast, but each lady took her solitary meal in her own apartment, and, probably, even in bed. Sometimes, indeed, a male or female visitant might be permitted to take this meal with her; but this was deemed an affair of so little account, that it was perhaps known only to the femme de chambre of the lady herself, or to the lacquey who ushered the person through the anteroom. The gentlemen of the family generally took their breakfasts at some fashionable cafés, where they lounged away more than an hour, in reading the public papers of the day and enquiring after the news. Clermont expected that the hour of dinner would, of course, assemble the family; but the Comte de V—— seldom had any dinner prepared in his house. His servants were on board wages; and it was at one of the fashionable restaurateurs near the court end of the town, that the ladies of the family, sometimes in company with the comte,

and sometimes attended by other gentlemen, partook of their necessary refreshment. The evenings were always devoted to amusements, of which there was an inconceivable variety. The theatres, the opera, balls of different kinds, public gardens, &c. &c. afforded a continual excuse for not staying at home: and Clermont now found it more difficult than ever to enjoy a moment's conversation with Virginie.

At length, however, finding that she did not object to receive company in her bed-chamber, he availed himself of the privilege, which he thought might more becomingly be allowed to a brother than to any other person; and he accordingly presented himself, one morning, at the door of her antechamber. Being introduced, he found her sitting at breakfast with a young lady of her acquaintance. Virginie blushed, and seemed embarrassed at the appearance of Clermont; but recovering herself, she soon became as sprightly as usual, and, with considerable archness, thanked him for the honour he had done her.

While the visiter was present, no particular discourse could take place between Virginie and Clermont: but, on her having taken leave, Clermont obliged his sister to sit down, after which, he fastened the door, and then entered into very close conversation with her. He spoke to her of what he had observed respecting Victor, and demanded of her what her views were with regard to him. "What are my uncle's intentions, Virginie?" he said; "I have a right to ask: does he mean to marry you to his son? You are of an age, my sister, when it is the custom, in this country, for young women to be settled; and I think that you ought now either to separate yourself from Victor, or to become his wife." Clermont concluded by offering her a home in England, and pressing her earnestly to accept it, having been authorized so to do by his paternal friend, the excellent Mr. Charlton.

Virginie seemed to shrink with a kind of instinctive horror from this proposal, and replied, without hesitation, that she would prefer death in France to life in England.

"Such words," said Clermont, "are easily spoken, Virginie; but you, who reject the comforts of religion, should be the last to speak of desiring death."

"Clermont," returned the young lady, again repeating her plea, "you and I are of dissimilar ways of thinking: you are an heretic, I am a Catholic: religion, therefore, had better be left alone between us."

"Were you a serious Papist, Virginie," replied Clermont, "I should be better satisfied with your state of mind than I am at present: but let me tell you, my sister, that the infidel expressions which you not unfrequently utter, would be as abhorrent in the estimation of a sincere Papist, as they are in mine. A Roman Catholic avows many tenets of which I totally disapprove; and yet I am persuaded that there is no serious man of that denomination who would not shudder at the contempt of God, and of the Saviour, which you not unfrequently express. But to leave this subject. My present business is to demand of you, what your views are respecting Victor."

The decided tone and manner with which Clermont spoke, forced from Virginie the confession, that she was strongly attached to Victor, and that she believed he preferred her before every other woman on earth; but that, as her fortune was small, her uncle did not desire their marriage: adding this information, that he had already taken several steps to bring about another union for his son, and also one for herself.

"And what," said the astonished Clermont, "are your intentions respecting this matter? Do you mean to submit to your uncle's wishes? What is Victor's determination?"

"Brother," replied Virginie, "wherefore do you concern yourself in this affair? Leave us to ourselves. We desire no interference. Our modes of thinking, as I said before, are altogether dissimilar: you have separated yourself from us by adopting heretical sentiments. Leave me to myself. You may make me more miserable, but you cannot contribute to my happiness, by interfering with our plans."

Clermont looked at her with a desire to read what was passing in her mind. The expression of her countenance was mysterious. "O Virginie, my sister!" he exclaimed, still gazing intently on her, "those who reject the guidance of their God, enter into dark and dreadful paths of which they know not the end. Be persuaded,

my sister! my beloved! daughter of my father! daughter of my mother! companion of my early infancy! Take your God for your guide; go to him through Christ; plead your Saviour's merits in your own behalf: and assuredly you will be set right; you will find comfort; you will receive pardon."

"Pardon!" said Virginie, "for what? What have I done?"

"Done!" repeated Clermont, looking earnestly upon her, "I have no particular suspicions of you; but I well know that you partake of a sinful nature in common with all mankind; and to the sin of your nature I know, also, that you have added that of open infidelity, and frequent blasphemy: for why should I not speak all that is in my mind?"

Virginie, during this conversation, had been violently agitated. Her countenance had varied repeatedly: and passion at length so powerfully influenced her, that, throwing herself back in her chair, she uttered a loud shriek, and fell into a kind of fit, in which her cries resounded through the house.

Clermont, grieved and astonished, rushed to the door to call for help, and in the antechamber he met Victor and the femme de chambre, together with others of the family, all of whom were alarmed by the cries of the young lady.

The first impulse of Victor was to hasten to Virginie, and take her in his arms. At the sound of his voice, she ceased to shriek, and melting into tears, laid her head on his shoulder; while he, with real anxiety, enquired the cause of her agitation: but as she gave no immediate answer, he looked furiously at Clermont, and asked him to account for his sister's distress.

"Willingly," replied Clermont; "but I must have no witnesses of what I shall say:"—and, as he spoke, he desired that the domestics, who had crowded in, might leave the room.

"Perhaps," said Victor, "you would rather choose to explain this matter in the Bois de Boulogne, or some other more private place?"

"This room," returned Clermont, calmly, "is sufficiently private, Victor. I will not affect to mistake your meaning: but, take it as you will, and come what will of

it, I now solemnly declare, that I never will imbrue my hands in the blood of any man. So God give me grace to keep this resolution!"

"You will not refuse then, Clermont," said Victor, somewhat more calmly, "to disclose what has passed between you and Virginie?"

"Certainly not," replied Clermont; "but I would rather that our conversation should have no witness." So saying, he led the way to his own apartment, and was followed by his cousin.

Clermont was not sorry at having this opportunity, which now presented itself for sounding the sentiments of Victor with regard to his sister. He hoped by this means to obtain some satisfaction in the affair. But although Victor listened to all that passed with considerable calmness, he made no answer from which his determination respecting Virginie could be understood. He did not deny that he loved Virginie, and that he had always loved her; and he expressed a wish that his circumstances were such as would render it in his power to supply her with every distinction which her virtues deserved: but he would enter into no explanation of his plans, or, rather, he seemed to express himself as one who had formed no plan of action, but was ready to be decided by any impulse of the moment.

Clermont, who through all these trying scenes was enabled to stand firmly to his Christian profession, missed not this occasion, on which he found Victor more serious than usual, of urging upon him the doctrines and duties of real religion: but, on the mere mention of this subject, the young man instantly became light and profane, and uttered several expressions so shocking to Clermont, that he thought it best to desist from pressing the matter any further. Thus, after having made every effort which he thought prudent with respect to his sister, this good brother was left in the same state of doubt as before with regard to her situation in reference to Victor, and he was also more strongly and painfully convinced of the infidel principles of both these his young relations.

In the mean time, Clermont beheld much in the conduct of his uncle and aunt, his cousin and sister, which grieved him. Both the comte and Victor spent nearly the whole of their time abroad, but not together. They

seldom returned home till late at night, and sometimes not till near the morning; and if Clermont by chance met them during the day, they appeared to be absorbed in some concerns which they were not willing to impart to any other person. The comtesse was, in the mean time, wholly devoted to her own society and their peculiar amusements; and Virginie also had her chosen companions with whom she went abroad. If Clermont happened to meet with any of these his relations, it was always in a crowd, or in some scene of gaiety; and they always seemed glad to shake him off, and to see him engaged with other persons, or in other parts of the apartment in which they might chance to be assembled. The comtesse was the only person who appeared to take the least pleasure in his society; but such was the levity, coquetry, and want of delicacy in her manner, that Clermont was as uneasy in her company as his other connexions could be in his.

Thus passed some weeks: at the end of which period two persons were brought forward whom Clermont had reason to think were the individuals to whom the comte would have no objection to unite his son and his niece in marriage. The one was an extremely rich and gay widow of about twenty-five years of age; and the other was a middle aged man, of no family indeed, but possessing great wealth and considerable influence at court.

The first appearance of these persons in the presence of Clermont was at a supper given at the Hotel de V——; and it was, even at this first meeting, sufficiently apparent what were the views entertained by the comte.

During the repeated interviews which took place on various occasions after this supper, it became very evident that Madame de Blemont (the lady above mentioned) was perfectly satisfied with the appearance and fashionable air of Victor, and that Monsieur de Sainterre appeared equally pleased with Virginie; but Clermont was still unable to penetrate the intentions of his cousin and sister with respect to these proposed marriages, though he had frequently found them in close conversation with each other, and once heard his sister say, "If fortune would but favour us, Victor, we might yet be happy."

It was in vain that Clermont solicited the confidence

of Virginie; the young lady continued to avoid him: and he found that he only exposed himself to insults by attempting to enter into any particular conversation with his cousin. It might, however, be expected that Clermont, being naturally deeply concerned in the happiness of his sister, was no idle spectator of what was passing around him; and the more so, as he had few acquaintances in Paris, and none, in fact, who actually interested him.

In the mean time, the frequent and long-continued absences of Victor surprised him; and he had already begun to entertain considerable fears respecting them, when his uncle, one day, calling him aside, and addressing him with more affection than usual, said, "My dear nephew, I am very uneasy about my son. I greatly fear that he has lately taken to gamble, and that to an extent which threatens the total ruin of all his prospects."

Clermont heard this communication with more grief than surprise; and, after having expressed his sorrow on the occasion, he asked what he could do to assist his cousin.

"Watch him, my dear nephew," said the comte: "discover his haunts. Follow him; and endeavour, when you see him in danger, to extricate him from his evil companions, and to bring him home."

"Sir," replied Clermont, "although the service will not be an acceptable one to my cousin, I am ready to undertake it, and hope that I may be enabled to be useful to him. But O, my uncle!" he added, "if I might but presume to open my mind to you, I should entreat you to seek another and a more powerful friend for my cousin than such a one as I am. I should implore you to use the influence of a father, to induce him to seek a heavenly and omnipotent guide for his youth." Clermont then, with the same Christian firmness which he had evinced throughout his whole residence in France, ventured to state to his uncle the anxiety which he felt at the irreligious state of his family, and boldly predicting that destruction would inevitably be the consequence of this contempt of the divine power, he earnestly besought his uncle to press the obligations of religion on his children without further loss of time. He also took

occasion to point out to him the regard which subsisted between his son and Virginie, and to ask him wherefore he wished to separate two persons who had been so long and faithfully attached.

The comte took no notice of that part of Clermont's address which referred to religion; but, replying to the latter part of his appeal only, he said, "Clermont, you are, perhaps, unacquainted with the state of my affairs. Though living in the style that you see, I am a poor man; and it is necessary that my son should marry so as to support the honour of his family."

"Honour!" repeated Clermont, "what are earthly honours in comparison with happiness? O, my uncle! do not compel your son to make a sacrifice which, I am persuaded, is utterly repugnant to his feelings."

"Clermont, you mistake me," replied the comte; "I use no compulsion. Victor sees the necessity of the plans I propose as clearly as I do: and he is entirely acquiescent in the arrangement."

"Inconceivable!" replied Clermont. "These are things I cannot understand."

"Why not?" said the comte.

Clermont had long been aware that his relations possessed scarcely one idea, or one feeling, in unison with his own, and that, therefore, arguments between them were always unsatisfactory; as they had no common principles on which their reasonings might be founded. He therefore made no reply to the last question of the comte, but took his leave, with the assurance that he would do every thing that might be in his power to benefit his cousin in the way that had been pointed out.

In compliance with his uncle's request, when Victor was preparing to go out on that same evening, Clermont contrived to meet him at the door of the hall, and addressing him with apparent carelessness, he said, "If you are going out, cousin, I should like to accompany you; for I have hitherto lived almost as a stranger in this place, and should be glad to become somewhat more intimately acquainted with the humours of this gay city."

On hearing this, Victor laughed aloud, and replied, "How now, my good cousin? do you begin to be tired of the philosophic life that you have hitherto led? Come

on, then, and I will introduce you into the world; and henceforward we shall understand each other better than we have hitherto done, I make no question."

Clermont was shocked at the turn which Victor thus gave to his request, and, upon reflection, he saw that his proposal had been an injudicious one, and that it bore with it an appearance of inconsistency which, for the honour of religion, every Christian should carefully avoid. He was therefore at a loss what further to say, till Victor, observing his hesitation, seemed inclined to draw him forward to the carriage which was waiting in the court.

"Stop one moment, Victor," said Clermont. "On second thoughts, I find that I must not go with you. You have misunderstood me: I am not weary of the part which I have hitherto been enabled to choose; I desire still to lead an innocent life; and I pray that I may always be kept from falling into sin; and, as I daily ask of my God that I may not be led into temptation, so I am resolved not to throw myself into it. If, therefore," he added, smilingly, "if the company you keep, my cousin, is not that which you would recommend as suitable for such a philosopher as I am, I will not accompany you." So saying, he dropped Victor's arm, and the young man, laughing loud, instantly jumped into his carriage, and was driven out of the court.

Clermont, for a short time after the departure of Victor, stood upon the steps of the portico, considering what measures he ought next to take. "What," said he, "shall I do for this misguided and unprincipled young man? how am I to watch him? whither must I follow him? And yet I must not disregard my uncle's request. Am I myself able to withstand the trials to which I cannot but be exposed in seeking him through all the haunts of vice with which this profligate capital abounds? O my God, enlighten and influence my mind on this subject, and make me to know the path in which I should walk!" While uttering these last words, being perhaps directed by some secret influence from above, he descended the steps, crossed the court, and, passing under the gate, he presently found himself in the street.

Those who have traversed the capital of England at night, and have beheld it blazing, as it were, at that

time with the brightness of a second day, must not expect an appearance equally brilliant at the same hour in the streets of Paris.

The Rue St. Honoré is one of the principal streets in Paris; notwithstanding which, the houses are for the most part mean; and those few which are of a superior kind, stand back from the street, in courts, having lodges or gateways in the front. A few lamps, suspended in the centre from ropes which run across the streets, shed a dim and imperfect light upon the pavement, and hardly allow the passenger to distinguish the forms of the houses on each side.

Clermont passed along this gloomy street in haste, and, taking the shortest way to the Palais Royal, he arrived at the gate at the moment in which several carriages were wheeling away from it; and among these he plainly distinguished that which belonged to Victor. He called to the coachman, but was not heard: and now, having no doubt that his cousin might be found in some apartment of the buildings which surround the several courts of the palace, he passed beneath the archway which is at the entrance of the court, and which forms a part of the habitation of the Duke of Orleans, and from thence he proceeded, without loss of time, into the piazza on the left.

The Palais Royal, built by Cardinal Richelieu, in 1636, could formerly boast of a beautiful garden, planted with the greatest exactness and precision. It contained two lawns, symmetrically bordered by rows of trees. Between these lawns was a basin in the form of a crescent, surrounded by trellis work, with many niches, in which were placed statues. A magnificent avenue of tillenels, resembling a noble archway, encompassed the garden, and was terminated at the end by elms, so trimmed as to represent porticoes. At present, however, these gardens are entirely transformed, although a few dusky trees yet remain, and a fountain is still seen to play in the centre of the first court. Immense galleries and innumerable shops have now taken the place of the avenues of tillenel, and of the leafy piazzas and the shadowy bowers with which it was once adorned. Neither is this ancient abode of princes more changed in its outward appearance than it is with respect to its inhabitants. To

use the words of a modern writer, "The Palais Royal is now a kind of camera-obscura, in which a stranger might contemplate all Paris;" for in this place there is assembled, in one point of view, every vanity, every folly, and, we might add, every inducement to vice, which the mightiest capital of the earth could possibly afford. The buildings which surround the two courts of the Palais Royal are of considerable height, and consist of many stories. The ground-floor is composed of shops, or houses of restaurateurs, having before them a paved walk and open gallery; cafés and gambling-rooms occupy the second story; and a range of apartments under ground afford the like places of entertainment for persons of inferior rank. We forbear to enquire into the uses to which the upper apartments of these ranges of buildings are appropriated; for, to adopt the words of the same author whom we have just quoted, "there are, in certain pictures, parts which ought to be thrown into the shade."

Into this place, such as we have partly described it, and such as we might further imagine it to be, Clermont now felt himself impelled by duty to enter, alone, and at that very hour when, under the covert of darkness, or by the merely dubious light of thinly scattered lamps, vice was stalking abroad, fearless and unreserved. Clermont, without any specific motive for his so doing, entered the piazza on the left, and passing on till he came to the wooden gallery which separates the two courts, he saw before him a figure which he thought resembled Victor. He accordingly followed the young man into the second court, where he disappeared through a doorway on the left. Clermont, though still at some distance, kept his eye fixed on this doorway, till, entering through it, he ascended a staircase which introduced him to an apartment called, Le Café des Milles Colonnes, one of the most celebrated in Paris, and here he immediately discovered that the young man whom he had followed was to him a total stranger. This apartment, notwithstanding its ostentatious appellation, was small, but it was adorned with many marble columns, which, being reflected by looking-glasses, judiciously arranged for the purpose, appeared to be multiplied beyond calculation, and thus seemed to entitle the room to its mag-

nificent characteristic, Des Milles Colonnes. The effect, however, of these arrangements was exceedingly bad; because the simplicity of the original idea was destroyed by several ill-judged ornaments, and various statues, in imitation of the antique, which were multiplied by the mirrors till the eye was wearied with the repetition.

But that which shocked the mind of Clermont more than any thing else in this place was a female of middle age and rather large dimensions, who was seated on an elevated chair of fine damask adorned with gold. She was placed with her back to a mirror, and had before her a marble table, on which were certain urns and vessels of gold.

This female appeared dressed with exquisite art, and the artificial rose and lily adorned her cheeks and neck. Clermont now remembered that he had heard Victor speak of this woman as being well known to him, and, therefore, revolting as it was to him to address a character of this description, he went up to her, and enquired whether she had seen the Chevalier de V—— during the evening.

Clermont's manner and appearance were those of a gentleman, and, as such, this person thought it worth her while to try to please him. In return to his question, she therefore assumed one of her most gracious smiles and softest cadences: but, after several coquettish circumlocutions, she was obliged to confess that she had seen nothing during that evening of the individual in question.

Nothing is more revolting to a mind agitated by strong emotions, and under the influence of virtuous feelings, than the unfeeling trifling of vicious characters. In consequence of this, it was with difficulty that Clermont could contain himself to hear her out, or even to answer with common politeness, so that, turning hastily round, he quitted this scene of vanity, and presently found himself again in the piazza.

I shall not accompany Clermont throughout all his wanderings during the course of this evening. Suffice it to say, that, at about one o'clock, he had almost determined to return to the Hotel de V——, when at the door of a restaurateur he met with a young man whom he had frequently seen in company with Victor. This

young man was not one whom Clermont would ever have made choice of as a companion: nevertheless, he was at this time glad to see him; and now, telling him that he was come in search of Victor, at the request of his father, he begged that, if it were in his power, he would direct him where to find him.

The young man replied, that he had not seen him during that evening; but added, that he could probably direct Clermont to a place where he might be found, as it was one of his usual haunts. Accordingly, the stranger conducted Clermont into one of the buildings on the right of the second square, and, taking him up several flights of stairs, he introduced him into a very large room, where a number of persons were engaged in games of hazard.

A deep silence reigned throughout the apartment when Clermont entered, (being introduced by the young gentleman above mentioned,) which silence was now and then broken by strong and sudden exclamations, expressive of violent but half-repressed emotion. Clermont walked quietly round the apartment, anxiously looking for Victor, who nowhere appeared; and he was just about to withdraw, eager to leave a scene which filled him with horror, when suddenly a violent altercation broke out at one of the tables, from which a young man, rising up, exclaimed, with a dreadful oath, "It is done! then I am lost!"

At the same moment, the young man who had uttered these words rushed towards the door; and, in an instant afterwards, the sound of a pistol in the passage, followed by that of a heavy fall upon the floor, struck dreadfully upon the ears of all present.

Every one in the apartment immediately arose; and many sprang forward to the door, insomuch that Clermont was unable to pass through the crowded doorway; but as he stood behind the throng, he heard the expiring groan of the miserable self-destroyer, and the exclamations of horror which immediately afterwards burst from every mouth.

Clermont remained in this scene of guilt and misery till he had ascertained that death had actually taken place; and then, being sick with horror, and faint with fatigue, he returned to the Hotel de V——, where his

first question to the porter was, "Is the chevalier returned? is my cousin in the house?"

Being relieved, in some degree, from his fears on Victor's account, (which were now become excessive,) by the answer of the porter, who replied, that Monsieur had already been an hour in the house, Clermont went to bed, where he, however, found not the least degree of repose till the morning had begun to dawn, at which time he fell asleep; but it was a sleep in which all the horrors of the past night were represented anew to his mind.

It was eight o'clock when Clermont awoke from his troubled rest; and then rising and dressing in haste, he resolved that before Victor could possibly leave the house he would seek him, and make one more attempt to persuade him to renounce that mode of life, the end of which, if pursued, would, he doubted not, be similar to the fate of that miserable young man whose death he had the night before witnessed. Influenced by this resolution, he stationed himself in a centre apartment of the hotel, through which he was aware that Victor must pass in order to go out: and there he waited for a considerable time, sometimes throwing his restless limbs on a sofa which was situated in the apartment, and sometimes pacing the room with hasty steps; his mind, during this painful interval, being incessantly engaged in prayer; but it was that kind of heartfelt exercise which those only can practise and appreciate who have lived in habitual and intimate union with their God.

More than an hour had thus elapsed before Victor appeared. He came out from his chamber in such a dress as indicated that it was his intention instantly to go out. But though he was attired with evident care, his face was pale, and there was a certain wildness in his manner which too plainly bespoke the disorder and agitation of his mind. At the sight of Clermont he started, and looked as if he would gladly have avoided him: but Clermont was in that state of high excitement which inspires the most timorous with courage, and which gives boldness to the most reserved. He instantly advanced towards Victor, on his first appearance, and entered without ceremony into the detail of all his views and apprehensions respecting him.

During the course of this history, I have found it necessary to repeat many conversations at some length. I now therefore forbear to enter into the particulars of that which took place between Clermont and Victor on the present occasion; because in so doing, I should be compelled to repeat many arguments that have been already adduced. I shall therefore content myself by simply stating the general heads of this conversation.

Clermont began by expressing his uneasiness at the habitual and mysterious absence of his cousin from home; and he stated that he was well acquainted with the fact of his frequenting gambling-houses; he also acknowledged that he had gone into one on the night before, expecting to find him there. He then informed him of the dreadful scene that he had there witnessed; and proceeded, in a manner at once exceedingly warm and affectionate, to point out to his cousin the inevitable consequences of a vicious course of conduct, both in the present world and in that which is to come.

Although Clermont's discourse was protracted to a considerable length, Victor heard him out, and seemed to be affected by many of his arguments. But at the moment that he ceased to speak, the unhappy young man arose without making any other reply than a simple declaration that he felt his cousin's kindness, and then fetching a deep sigh, he walked back to his own apartment, in which he presently shut himself up. Clermont flattered himself that he might take this action as a token for good; and new hopes with regard to his misguided cousin were beginning to arise in his breast, when his sister entered the saloon by a door at the further end, but on seeing her brother she immediately started, and seemed half inclined to draw back.

"Virginie," said Clermont, "you appear surprised and agitated at seeing me here. Will you not, however, allow me a moment's hearing? Though I am your nearest relation, you continually shun me; you look upon me as your enemy; and, instead of making me the confidant of your sorrows, you shrink with horror when you behold me."

"My sorrows!" repeated Virginie: "what would you insinuate, Clermont? why do you suppose that I have any particular afflictions?"

"I have no desire," returned Clermont, "to extort a

confidence which is continually refused me. But let us not now speak of our own concerns, Virginie: it is Victor of whom we must think at present."

"Victor!" she reiterated, turning pale, and trembling excessively; "what do you fear for Victor?"

"Every thing," said Clermont. "He is an infidel, and a gambler; and what may we not expect from such an one? O Virginie! my sister! you know not what dangers you incur when you reject the divine teachings, and refuse the deference due from the creature to the Creator! The Lord forbid that I should ever experience in my own mind the darkness and horror of infidelity: nevertheless I can, in some measure, conceive what it is; and I never wonder at any act of desperation, however dreadful, of which such persons are guilty."

"What do you mean, Clermont? what do you allude to?" said Virginie.

"This, my sister, is the meaning of what I would say," returned Clermont, "that unless you can discover some means of dissuading Victor from his present course of life, and unless the divine mercy interposes to awaken him from his delusive dream of infidelity, I look forward to some dreadful catastrophe, of which I dare not now even think."

Virginie became still more pale; and sunk back on a sofa, sighing bitterly.

"O my sister!" said Clermont; "better would it have been for you, and for our unhappy cousin, that you had died in your cradles, while yet you were incapable of raising your impious voices against the majesty of your Creator. O my God! my God!" he added, clasping his hands, and directing his eyes upwards, "have mercy on these young people. Open their eyes, ere it is yet too late, to a sight of the heinous crime of unbelief of which they are guilty; and deliver them, O Lord, through thy free and unmerited grace, from the sure consequences of their transgressions."

Virginie interrupted her brother in the midst of these his devout ejaculations, to ask him what were his particular fears on Victor's account. "He is now in the house," she said; "for I was told that he came in last night, and that he then appeared as usual. What then do you particularly apprehend?"

Clermont now informed his sister of all that had passed between his uncle and himself on the last evening, and he also laid before her the detail of his visit to the Palais Royal, and he particularly mentioned the dreadful scene that he had witnessed in the gambling-house.

"And why should you suppose that Victor is in danger of imitating this miserable man?" said Virginie.

"Because he exposes himself amidst the same circumstances of risk," returned Clermont, "and he rejects those comforts and restraints of religion by which alone the mind of man is soothed in affliction, and his passions are controlled in the moment of high and otherwise overpowering excitement."

Virginie, though pale and trembling, affected to smile at these fears, and said, "Brother, you alarm yourself without sufficient cause; this is not Victor's first introduction into the world; he plays with judgment; he is not rash; and I conclude, that it is more probable that he may acquire a fortune, which will set him above the necessity of the odious match that is now contemplated for him, than that he will inconsiderately become the means of his own ruin."

On hearing this remark, Clermont, who, during the last few minutes, had been pacing the apartment with hurried steps, as if thereby to relieve the perturbation of his spirits, stood still before his sister, and looking intently at her, he exclaimed, "And is it so? do I now understand this mystery? It was all inexplicable before. O miserable Virginie! The thing is then done; and you yourself will be the destruction of the man whom you love."

The argument between Virginie and her brother now assumed a new aspect, by which he endeavoured to convince her of the danger and impiety of attempting to control her own future circumstances by the encouragement of measures so unlawful. And he availed himself of this opportunity to point out the blessedness of the state of that man, who, having resigned himself, both his soul and body, into the hands of his God, is thereby delivered from every anxious care respecting his subsequent situation in life; having thus been enabled to cast all his care upon him who careth for him.

Virginie impatiently heard her brother speaking on

this subject; and then she recurred to her old plea, that as he was a heretic, and she a Catholic, it was therefore impossible that they could agree on matters of religion: and though Clermont pressed her to hear what he had further to say, she arose and withdrew to her apartment.

Clermont, being now again left alone, began to consider what he should next do for Victor; and contemplated with anguish the little prospect that he had of serving him effectually: for he felt convinced that if the young man was still resolved to continue in the ruinous course upon which he had entered, it would be impossible for him, either by watching him, or by any other means, to preserve him from the effects of his own rashness. He resolved, however, to do what he could in order that he might thus save himself from after reflections of self-reproach in case that which he most feared should eventually take place: he therefore continued at home during the whole of the morning; and finding that Victor did not attempt to go out, Clermont felt his mind somewhat relieved by the circumstance.

In the evening, the comtesse was to give an entertainment: and, as Madame de Blemont was expected to be present, there was no doubt entertained that Victor would be at home.

When Clermont entered the saloon in the evening, he found it illuminated with great splendour and brilliancy, which, however, ill agreed with the real character and the well-known feelings of every individual of the family that was to receive the guests. The apartment was furnished with cassolettes, which, being now lighted up, exhaled all the perfumes of the East. Several persons were already arrived. Clermont was rejoiced to see his cousin Victor elegantly dressed, standing among a group of young ladies, and conversing with gaiety. Virginie soon afterwards approached the little circle: but there was a sadness in her air which she seemed in vain endeavouring to conceal. She stood for a moment beside her cousin, and their eyes met with an expression which Clermont was destined never to forget. She then passed on; and Clermont observed that Victor looked after her as she retreated; and he thought that he sighed: but rousing himself in a moment afterwards, he resumed his seeming gaiety.

Presently the crowd in the saloon became such, that it was found desirable to disperse the circle of ladies, and to distribute them around the tables for play.

When the tables were arranged, some of the persons who were disengaged passed forward into the gallery, which also was illuminated. In this gallery they had placed a harp; and several ladies gathered themselves round this harp, while one began to play. The air which was first chosen was an English one; and the lady, on being asked to sing, confessed that she had forgotten the words, which were English.

Some one present then said, "We have an English gentleman here, who perhaps can refresh your memory: and Clermont was in consequence called. The young man was too polite to advance any objection against complying with this call, especially when pressed by the comtesse: but, before he left the saloon, he requested that lady not to lose sight of Victor, but if he went out of the room, immediately to inform him of the circumstance.

It was some time before Clermont could persuade the young ladies who were gathered round the harp that he was unable to assist them in recalling the song, and perhaps more than half an hour had passed before he could extricate himself from their importunities, which were particularly annoying to him at this time, when his mind was so fully engaged and agitated by other matters: but when he had returned to the saloon, he looked in vain for Victor; and was surprised to see the comtesse so deeply engaged in play, that it was probable she had utterly forgotten the interests of her son-in-law in her attention to her own more immediate concerns. Clermont immediately applied to the servants, who were waiting in the antechamber; and being told by them that his cousin had gone out only a few minutes before, he hastened into the court without loss of time, and made the same demand of the *Suisse* at the gate.

Clermont, as I before said, was fully aware of the fruitlessness of any attempts of his to save a profligate young man who was bent on his own destruction; nevertheless, he was determined (the Lord assisting him) to do what he could for him: he accordingly hastened into the street, engaged the first *fiacre* he could meet with, and proceeded to the Palais Royal.

As we have, in description, followed Clermont in his pursuits through these mazes of vice and folly during the past night, we judge that our reader will not require either a repetition of the same account, or the detail of another so little varied that it cannot be supposed to afford any additional information. Suffice it to say, that the sun was already rising when Clermont returned, fatigued and dispirited, to the Hotel de V——, having sought Victor in every place where he thought it at all probable that he might be found, though his own comparative ignorance of the town added not a little to his difficulties on this occasion.

He had enjoyed scarcely any rest during the two past nights; and when told, on his arrival, that Victor was not returned, though he was now excessively fatigued, his slight inclination to sleep totally left him. He, however, withdrew to his apartment, changed his dress, and in much agitation devoted some moments to earnest prayer.

At eight o'clock he again left his room, and on going into the saloon, he found every thing in that disordered and comfortless state, which is usual in every mansion on the morrow after some great festivity. Chairs and tables, cards and counters, were scattered in the utmost confusion through the apartments, and a faint and oppressive odour exhaled from the vases of perfume, though the fire which had caused the exhalations on the preceding evening was now extinguished.

Clermont unclosed the shutters, and threw open a window. The fresh air being admitted into the room, dispelled the sickly odours of the exhausted perfumes. He sat down on a sofa, and presently became deeply absorbed in thought, till at length, being utterly worn out by fatigue, he fell asleep in the attitude in which he sat.

It was eleven o'clock when the comte entered the saloon. His step awakened Clermont, and his question, "Do you know any thing of Victor?" thoroughly aroused him.

Clermont told the comte how he had spent the night; and this account heightened the father's agitation to such a degree, that they both agreed to go out together immediately to seek for the young man.

As the comte, of course, knew more of Paris, and of the places likely to be frequented by a young man devoted to gambling, than his nephew did, there was reason to expect that the search for Victor, when conducted by him, would be more successful.

Clermont and the comte had visited many well-known haunts of the lovers of high play, both in the Palais Royal and in other parts of the town, before they met with the least tidings of Victor.

At length they were informed by a young gentleman, an acquaintance, that the Chevalier de V—— had been seen, at an early hour of the preceding night, in a house in the Fauxbourg St. Germaine; that he had engaged deeply in play, and had suffered losses, but to what amount the young gentleman either could not, or perhaps would not, say.

This information greatly increased the alarm of the comte, and tended also to augment the fears of Clermont. The uncle and nephew, therefore, immediately repaired to the house above mentioned, but they could gain no further information than that Victor had left it at about three o'clock in the morning.

It was five o'clock in the afternoon when the comte and Clermont returned to the Hotel de V—— with the faint hope of finding Victor there. They found the comtesse and Virginie in the saloon: the latter was evidently in deep distress, pale and silent; and the comtesse was in vain endeavouring to comfort her with those commonplace topics of consolation which are in fact the best which worldly persons can supply. When the comte informed them of the result of their search, and expressed his fears that some unhappy consequence had resulted from Victor's loss, Virginie cast a look of mingled terror and shame at her brother, and then exclaiming, "Oh, Victor! Victor!" she sunk back in a state of total insensibility upon the sofa on which she was sitting.

Clermont felt himself unable to bear the sight of his sister's anguish; and the very knowledge of the infidel and consequently utterly comfortless state of her mind rendered his feelings on her account even still more intolerable. He was already in a fever, through anxiety and fatigue; but being perfectly regardless of his own feelings, he determined to renew his search for his cousin,

and to return no more till he could bring tidings of the unhappy young man.

Were we again to accompany Clermont in his midnight wanderings through the streets of Paris, we should only have to describe a variety of bitter feelings which occupied his mind—feelings greatly increased by the view of that thoughtlessness and vice in others, the dreadful consequences of which he had already begun to apprehend in all its horrors as awaiting his uncle's family.

Clermont had, during the last forty-eight hours, become better acquainted with the situation of the different houses of public resort in Paris than he would have been, according to his usual mode of living, during as many years' residence in that capital. He had once again visited all those places to which he had accompanied his uncle in the morning, but with no better success. The morning light was faintly dawning on the city when Clermont found himself beneath that front of the Louvre which looks towards the Seine. The night air was chilly, and the mind of Clermont was in that state of stupor which commonly follows any violent emotion; a state which, in an irreligious mind, partakes of the nature of despair, but which, in a pious spirit, still retains that sweet and heartfelt confidence which enables the Christian, under the most severe trials to which human nature is liable, to say, "I know in whom I have believed."

Clermont proceeded along the banks of the river towards the Pont Neuf. It was three o'clock in the morning: the season was summer. The whole city was buried in a profound stillness; the streets were deserted and silent, and, to use the language of a modern celebrated writer, they resembled the long galleries of a funereal monument. All were asleep but those characters whose evil purposes kept them awake, and who were silently skulking amid the shadows of the night in search of their prey.

Clermont still advanced, and soon found himself in the front of an hotel of a fine appearance, illuminated as for a gala. Many carriages, belonging to private persons, were arranged within the court, and a line of hackney-coaches waited at the door. Clermont stood still near this spot, a faint hope rising in his mind that he might here find Victor. The company was breaking up,

as Clermont presently observed by the motion of the carriages within the court. He placed himself where he might best examine those who went out, and he soon became persuaded that these persons had been engaged in the same desperate games of chance which, he greatly feared, had effected the ruin of his cousin. Some of them, in going out, abused their servants with bitterness; others spoke to them with that disgusting familiarity which bespeaks a mind thrown from its balance by undeserved success; others laughed aloud; and others muttered curses between their teeth.

As the carriages began to move, the noise became confused and indistinct; but Clermont, still intent on one object, watched each countenance as closely as possible, until, at length, being convinced that Victor was not of the company, he turned away, and proceeded in his search.

It was now four o'clock. Clermont entered upon the Pont Neuf, and stood awhile, leaning on the parapet, eyeing with vacant gaze the outline of the buildings to the right and left of the river, as this outline appeared marked upon the horizon by the faint light of the dawning day.

From this place he could see the palaces of kings and the humble dwellings of the little merchant; and beneath him were multitudes of boats and larger vessels, whose occupants were just beginning to rouse themselves. "Oh!" exclaimed Clermont, lifting up his eyes towards heaven, "another night of misery is past, and the sun again rises in all its glory on this infidel city! Ah, unhappy country! Oh, land of my fathers! how long wilt thou deny thy God? how long will thy sons persist to reject the fountain of living waters, and hew unto themselves broken cisterns, which will hold no water?"

Clermont then thought of his own happy and peaceful childhood, of his paternal friend in England, and of that divine mercy by which he had been made to differ from too many of his countrymen, and led betimes to understand and feel the consolations of religion. "O my God!" said he, "what is man without thee? and what is hell but separation from thee? May I henceforth be assisted to love and serve thee with every faculty of my soul and body! May my business and my pleasure be to

promote thy worship!" He ceased to pray, for at this moment a thought glanced across his mind, a thought which, though indistinct and unformed, filled his heart with comfort.—"May I not," said he, "at some future time, be in one way or another devoted to the religious instruction of my country? I have heard of David Brainerd, of Swartz, and others, who have laid themselves out for the instruction of the savages of America, and of the heathen in the East: and Oh, France! Oh, my country! dost thou not need the labours of the missionary more than these dwellings of the unlettered savage?—thou who once knewest thy God and Saviour, and hast now departed from thy first love?"

For a short time, the mind of Clermont was led away by this train of thought from the more immediate concerns which had lately occupied him: soon, however, recollecting himself, he turned from the parapet, and stood for a moment, considering whither next he should go. During this momentary period of reflection, his mind passed, as it were, over every street in the great capital in the centre of which he stood. "Victor!" he exclaimed, "I have sought thee every where among the living: art thou among the dead? O my unhappy cousin! where shall I find thee?" A dreadful idea then shot across his mind; and, irresistibly impelled by this idea, he instantly sought La Place du Marche Neuf.

We now again proceed to quote from the celebrated author to whom we have already more than once referred during the course of this narrative.

"Of all the public establishments of this capital," says this writer, "La Morgue is that, the destination of which presents to the mind the most painful and revolting idea. The name of it even is unknown to the greater part of the inhabitants of Paris: and among the small number of those who know the situation and design of this sad inclosure, undoubtedly there are very few who have had the strength of mind to approach it. Destruction and death there present themselves wearing the most hideous aspects. There the spectator does not behold the calm and decent melancholy of the tomb, the pious, and often pleasingly mournful spectacle of the funeral ceremony; neither have we there the imposing, though terrible ideas conveyed to us which the field of battle presents to the

lover of martial glory; but we behold in La Morgue the naked and sanguinary image of suicide, murder, assassination, and despair. There death appears in all its horror.

"I still remember," continues the same author, "the first impression which the view of this terrible place made upon me. I was going out from the college, and I followed a crowd of people who were passing under the vaults of the ancient chatelet; curiosity impelling me forward, at it also did my companions.

"Beneath the foundations of that gothic tower, the last remains of a palace, said to have been built by Cæsar, there is, on the left, a deep air-hole formed in the ancient building, which admits a few rays of light into a subterraneous chamber adjoining the lower gaol. Through the grates of this aperture I was enabled to introduce my head; and there I saw the body of a young female, the extreme paleness of which detached itself as a ray of light from the deep shades which surrounded it.

"La Morgue has been transferred, for some years past, to a building constructed for the purpose, upon the Place du Marche Neuf. This edifice, which stands alone on the extremity of the Pont St. Michel, is of a form suitable with its destination: its roof presents the appearance of an antique tomb; its architecture is severe; and the distribution of its apartments simple and commodious. The entrance is through a spacious porch, which separates two halls, one of which is appropriated to anatomical investigations, and the other to the exposure of the bodies which are brought there. The first of these halls is interdicted to the public, and windows of unpolished glass render it inaccessible to the eye of the passenger. The other is shut by a cloister of glass, which admits a view into the interior. Large openings in the stone-work, which are never filled up, and yet are not observable to the eye, continually admit the air, and illuminate the building throughout its whole extent. Within the second chamber, and parallel with the windows, on an oblique plane, are placed tablets of black marble, on which the dead are exposed, while their garments are hung upon the wall. The most retired part of this building serves for a habitation of the person charged with the care of this dreadful place."

Thus we have been enabled to introduce an accurate description of this edifice, another for purposes similar to which has yet never been known, and which we trust will never be required in any other part of the world. For let it be remembered, that until the infidel inhabitants of the capital of the French nation rejected their God and renounced their Saviour by a national decree, this superb temple for the self-murderer was not found necessary: and although in every country some unhappy individuals may have existed who have been guilty of this soul-ruining crime, still these instances are very rare, and might frequently be attributed to bodily disorder, which affecting the brain, deprives the individual of every power of self control. Yet there is no country besides France, in which it is become a common practice for every person who has rendered his life burdensome to himself by his crimes, to terminate it by a violent and self-inflicted death.

But to leave these reflections, which might otherwise lead us too far, and proceed with our narrative.——Clermont had heard of La Morgue. He knew its situation and the purposes to which it was devoted. And no sooner did the dreadful idea enter his mind, that he might there perhaps find the corpse of the unhappy young man whom he had long sought in vain, than he hastened to the place, in a state of feeling which might be more easily conceived than expressed.

The part of the city to which Clermont was going, was one that he had never before visited; and as, at that early hour, he did not meet with any person in the street, who could direct him, he took a more circuitous course than was necessary; and, in consequence, did not arrive at the Place du Marche Neuf until the sun had arisen above the horizon, and it had become perfectly light.

Clermont was not long before he discovered the building that he was seeking, it being sufficiently indicated to a casual observer by its peculiar construction. He started with apprehension at the sight, but advanced instantly toward the portico.

As he entered this gloomy edifice, an excessive trembling agitated his whole frame, and the violent beating of his heart almost deprived him of breath. Still, however,

he proceeded, and, passing onward to the most remote part of the vestibule, he looked through the windows of the hall that was destined for the reception of the bodies of those wretched individuals who, having committed suicide, have been found by persons to whom they are unknown, and he saw with horror a corpse extended on one of the marble slabs. For a moment he looked and doubted; but the next instant produced the dreadful certainty, that he had at length found Victor where he had least desired to see him.

The unhappy young man, after having spent many hours at the gambling-table, had at length thrown himself into the river, being reduced to despair by his great losses; and though the body had been taken up within an hour, it was too late to restore life; and therefore, as Victor was unknown to those about him, he had been consigned to that place of shame and abandonment in which his cousin found him.

There are some scenes which may be met with in human life, and some emotions experienced by the mind, to which it would be utterly impossible to do justice by any description which could be given: and such were the circumstances of the present occasion, on which Clermont first became convinced that it was actually the body of his miserable cousin which he now beheld, pale, disfigured, and extended on the cold black marble within the walls of La Morgue. Such were his feelings, that a considerable time had elapsed before he recollected himself. A violent flood of tears at length came to his relief; and the voice of the *concierge*, who had been for some time addressing him, though he knew it not, was the first occurrence which brought him to his recollection.

"Apparently, Sir," said this man, who, from his situation, was grown callous to ordinary scenes of woe, "you know that unhappy gentleman? The body has lain here for some hours. It seems he drowned himself. Though taken up soon afterwards, all life was extinct when he was brought hither."

"May I be permitted," said Clermont, "to go into the hall, and once again to take hold of that hand which so lately was warm with life?"

The *concierge* opened the door of the chamber of

death. A faint earthy smell was perceptible, and the air struck cold and damp to his feelings. The same kind of stupor which had before come upon Clermont, now again took possession of his mind; and under its influence he advanced, with apparent composure, to the side of the corpse, and stood for a while with his arms folded, and his eyes fixed on the well-known features, which were less changed than might have been expected from the manner of the unhappy young man's death. But who would pretend to express the thoughts which engaged the mind of Clermont as he stood by the last cold couch of Victor? Yet he was, perhaps, incapable of reflection, though his heavy groans betrayed his deep distress.

In this manner I know not how long he might have stood, had he not been interrupted by several voices, in accents of terror, which suddenly broke in upon the silent scene. Clermont unconsciously turned towards the door, when, who can conceive his feelings on beholding his sister enter, followed by his uncle, while several servants appeared in the back-ground? The unhappy father, at the sight of Clermont, whose presence in that place but too certainly confirmed the dreadful report which had by that time reached the Hotel de V—— of the awful death of his only son, shrunk back and fainted in the arms of his servant. But Virginie advanced. Her cheek was coloured, not as formerly with an artificial glow, but with the flush of frenzy, excited by that false spirit which sometimes supports the ardent mind of youth in the moment of the severest trial. Her long hair had escaped from its accustomed confinement, or perhaps had been torn down by her own hands, and floated wildly over her shoulders. She came up close to the side of the corpse, and there standing for a moment, she thus addressed it: "Ah! yes! it is my Victor! my beloved! and here, here," she added, laying her hand on that cold hand which Clermont had removed from under the sheet by which the body was covered, "here I make that vow which shall unite us for ever. For ever, in this awful moment, in this dreadful place, I bind myself to you, my Victor: for you have been my first and only love."

So saying, she pressed her lips on the damp forehead

of the corpse, and again addressed that cold corpse with every word which despair and love might be supposed to dictate. Then with a motion too sudden and unexpected to allow of any interference, she drew a dirk or dagger from beneath her clothes, and struck it into her bosom.

Clermont, instantly awakened by this action from his stupor, called aloud for help, and, with one arm, catching his sister round the waist, as she was falling to the ground, he, with his other hand, seized her arm.

"Let me alone!" she exclaimed, with furious eagerness, "I will die with him; I have sworn it, and I will die." Then, with a vehement struggle disengaging her arm, she struck the dagger a second time into her breast.

The *concierge* and the servants were now all gathered round, while Clermont was still holding her. After the last violent effort, her hand quitted its grasp, and the dagger, which fell at the same moment to the pavement, was now, as it were, swimming in the blood which poured from the wounds.

"Help! help!" cried Clermont, as he pressed his open hand upon his sister's side, thus endeavouring to close the wounds, and stop the amazing effusion of blood. "Oh! my sister! Help! help! or she dies!"

A surgeon soon appeared, but his skill was ineffectual. Virginie had completed the work that she sought to accomplish; and, before the surgeon entered, her breath had grown fainter; her pulse had nearly ceased to beat; her pale features had become convulsed, and her eyes set; and, after a few short moments more, her spirit departed with three deep sighs at awful intervals.

"Oh, Virginie! Oh, Victor!" said Clermont, as he pressed his lips upon those of his sister, still warm with departing life, "now—now—now, but for religion, but that I have my God for my help, I would rush from this abhorred life as you have done, and take my place on the cold earth by your side." So saying, he hurried from the scene, passed by his uncle without seeing him, and fell senseless on the steps of the vestibule.

There were so many persons, acquaintances of the unhappy family, that were by this time gathered round this place of death, that succour was presently administered

to Clermont. He was taken up and carried to the Hotel de V——; where a long illness, and a temporary derangement of intellect in consequence, relieved him from the many dreadful mental images which otherwise must necessarily have followed these miserable events.

During this illness, Clermont was often visited by Madame de V——, who shewed him many kind attentions; but never once, as he could recollect, by his uncle. It was long, however, before he was in circumstances to make any particular enquiries. At length, however, having perfectly recovered his recollection, he one day ventured to ask the comtesse after her husband, and to enquire of her concerning the state of his spirits.

"My dear Clermont," said Madame de V——, "the comte is wonderfully composed; he has endured his afflictions like a wise man and a philosopher; he has filled every one who knows him with admiration."

"A philosopher!" said Clermont. "Can philosophy enable a man to sustain afflictions of this kind with composure?"

"My dear friend," returned the comtesse, with that invariable levity from which she never departed, "you do not know the power of true philosophy, nor what it enables a man to do and to suffer. The comte has, as I before remarked, astonished all Paris; and he is at this moment more collected and fitter for public business than he perhaps ever was during his life."

"But did he not at first," said Clermont, "that is, immediately after that most horrible, most unspeakably horrible day, did he not then sink? did his philosophy then support him?"

"He felt as a father," replied the comtesse, "as a father amidst the most dreadful circumstances in which a father could be placed. But he did not obtrude his feelings on others. He shut himself up in his own apartment, and did not appear till he could do so with that composure which, on the part of his friends, precluded all attempts at condolence."

"And has he," said Clermont, "been able to maintain this appearance with any degree of consistency?"

"He has," said the comtesse; "I rejoice to say that he has; and that he now goes through all his duties both as a private man and as a statesman precisely as he

formerly did. Neither have his affairs suffered any more than a temporary derangement from the dreadful accident to which you allude."

"Wonderful, indeed!" said Clermont. "How am I to understand this? If my uncle continues happy amidst such inexpressibly dreadful circumstances, I must never again question the power of philosophy to ensure the felicity of man."

The comtesse smiled, and hinted that philosophy had often been known to do more than religion itself for human nature.

Clermont shook his head. "These things," said he, "are to me inexplicable."

"You doubt my assertion respecting your uncle, Clermont," said the comtesse, again smiling. "Well, be it so. I trust that you will soon be able to leave your room, and again to join our family party. You will then be an eyewitness of the triumphant manner in which the Comte de V—— has borne himself up above the malice of fortune."

She then proceeded to inform Clermont of their future plans. She told him that the comte, through the friendship of the emperor, had procured a diplomatic situation at a northern court, and that it was, therefore, his intention to leave Paris in a very few weeks, in order to repair thither. She also acquainted Clermont of her intention to accompany her husband; and she spoke of this her determination to leave Paris as a mighty sacrifice which it demanded the utmost effort of female courage to make.

There thus appeared to be, in the manner of the comtesse, such a perversion of common sense, such an evident straining at trifles, and so light a mode of speaking of the most distressing afflictions to which human nature is liable, that Clermont felt utterly at a loss how to carry this conversation any further. His heart sickened at the recollection of the dreadful scene within the walls of La Morgue; and he could hardly conceive it possible that the tombs of Virginie and Victor should scarcely be washed by a single tear. Affected with this thought beyond all power of control, he leaned his head against the arm of the sofa on which he sat, and burst into an agony of sorrow, which, for a short time, effectually put an end to the unfeeling impertinences of the comtesse.

A few days after this, Clermont, feeling his strength sufficient for the effort, left his chamber, and made his appearance in the saloon at the moment when he knew that his uncle and aunt were engaged with company. He chose this opportunity, in order that the presence of other persons might prevent the necessity of any particular address to his uncle.

It was evening, and the party were engaged in conversation, and sitting in a small circle, when Clermont entered. At the sight of him the comtesse uttered an expression of pleasure, and the whole party arose.

Clermont was pale and thin, and still weak from the influence of his late very severe sufferings. As he advanced, his head began to swim, and his knees failed him. The comtesse ran towards him, gave him the support of her arm, and led him into the midst of the circle, where she placed him on a sofa.

In this situation, in this place, where Clermont had so often seen the miserable pair whose terrible end was ever present to his mind, the young man found himself, for a few moments, unable to speak, to look up, or to take the least notice of the compliments that were paid him on his amendment in health, by the persons around him.

"Come, come, my friends," said the comtesse, who had observed the state of Clermont's feelings with a quickness not unusual in persons of her nation, "let us leave our invalid to himself for a few moments, and talk of other things. Your kindness overpowers him. Let me see. What were we speaking of before this agreeable surprise? O! the first representation of the last new comedy! and you were saying that Talma surpassed himself in the hero."

With the assistance of the first representation of the new comedy and the surprising efforts of Talma, Clermont had time given him to recover himself. He gradually looked up, and turned his eyes towards his uncle, eager to read the expression of his countenance; hoping, notwithstanding the assertion of the comtesse to the contrary, that he might there observe some little indications of that brokenness of spirit, which, humanly speaking, often proves a kind of preparation for the introduction of better things. The comte happened at that moment to be looking at the person who was expatiating in praise

of the reigning favourite of the drama; and, therefore, Clermont had an opportunity of contemplating him for a length of time without being observed. The comte had been handsome, and his countenance prepossessing: but, as is common with persons of his nation in middle age, his features had become strongly marked, and his complexion, which had once been a clear and glowing brown, was now grown sallow and swarthy. Strong and decisive as was every line of his face when Clermont first knew him a few months past, he at this time perceived a remarkable difference in them, and every furrow now appeared deeply graven and fast fixed as in a figure of stone or brass. An expression of unutterable melancholy was remarkable in his dark eye; and not the slightest variation of countenance took place during the whole time in which he remained under the observation of his nephew's eye.

At length he spoke. His voice was strong and sonorous as usual, and his style clear and connected. He even seemed for a moment to grow warm with his subject, and spoke with emphasis; but still not even the slightest symptom of that animation or illumination of countenance, which commonly appears more or less in the face of every human being in conversation, was visible on the features of this unhappy man: and Clermont could not help inwardly saying, "Victor, Victor, thou art not forgotten! Whatever the careless world may think, thy ruin has sunk like lead upon thy father's heart."

After several severe struggles with himself, Clermont addressed his uncle, putting some question to him relative to the subject which happened at that time to constitute the matter of discourse of the company. At the sound of his voice, which Clermont had endeavoured to make as easy as possible, the comte turned round, looked full upon him, and answered with perfect apparent calmness, but with a distant and polite reserve, such as a man would use towards an entire stranger.

By degrees the conversation of the company became more animated. Several persons present hazarded certain witty expressions; Madame de V—— laughed aloud; and Clermont endeavoured to smile. But no change passed on the features of the comte. The

strong lines of his face seemed set for ever, and refused to relax into the least tendency towards a smile; and Clermont felt that this unhappy man was, perhaps, likely never to smile again. "O!" thought he, "this philosophic pride will not avail; this rebellion against the chastisements of the Almighty will not succeed. How inexpressibly would I rather see this unhappy father broken down beneath the hand of his God! how much more gladly would I behold him trembling, confounded, and laid in the dust! How dreadful is this to witness, and how terrible to see my father's brother thus sullenly, proudly, and stubbornly, refusing to acknowledge his misery! But here I behold another horrible effect of infidelity, I am furnished with a still more striking example of that hardness of heart, and stubbornness of will, which accompanies unbelief."

Clermont continued in the saloon with his aunt and uncle till the company withdrew. It was eleven o'clock when they took their leave; and the comte at the same time retired to his own chamber, leaving Madame with Clermont, to whom she thus addressed herself. "Well, my friend, and are you not astonished? Did I not tell you so? Did you ever witness equanimity like this?"

"If you are speaking, Madame, of my uncle's appearance," replied Clermont, "I never did, neither do I desire ever to see any thing of the kind again." Clermont then opened his mind to his aunt, on the subject of his uncle's state of feelings; but he soon found that she was totally incapable of comprehending him. He therefore abruptly broke off his discourse, and returned with increased uneasiness to his chamber.

For some days after this appearance of Clermont in the saloon, he saw his uncle at intervals, but had, nevertheless, no opportunity of entering into particular conversation with him, the comte always appearing with that cold, formal, and gloomy air which I have already described.

Preparations were now avowedly being made for the departure of the family from Paris; and Clermont began anxiously to look for news from the person who had undertaken to secure his safe return to England. The comte at length announced to his nephew, that this intelligence was come, and he added, that it would be

needful for him to depart immediately towards the sea-coast. At the same time, he presented him with a ring, and some other little valuables, which had been his sister's; and he further expressed a wish that they might meet again at some future time.

Clermont was now, by the death of the unhappy Victor, become the heir of his uncle's estates and titles: but to this circumstance the comte made no allusion, neither was it hinted at by Clermont, who was anxious to avail himself of this, perhaps, his last particular conversation with his relative, to enter with him on the most important subject which can engage the human mind. As the extremely cold and cautious manner of the comte was not in the least degree likely to present the smallest opening for a conversation of this kind, Clermont was himself obliged directly to introduce it; abrupt as it might appear for him to enter into a regular argument in favour of religion, of the comfort which it is capable of administering to persons in distress, and of the danger of neglecting the means of salvation so freely offered through Christ the Saviour.

The comte allowed his nephew to proceed for some time without interruption. Then calmly rising, he said, "These are mere matters of opinion, Clermont. The mind of man is constituted in such endless varieties, that he who attempts to make all men think alike on any given point, may be compared to the tyrant Procrustes, who would insist that the persons of every individual among his subjects should be fitted to one measure; and for this purpose he prepared an iron bedstead, in order to correspond with the length of which, a tall man must needs be cut, and a short one extended. You, my good young man, have been brought up as an heretic: I am a philosopher: and the best chance that we have of being agreeable to each other, is perhaps for us never to agitate the subjects on which we disagree." So saying, he left the room.

Clermont was now, at length, convinced, that little if any hope remained of his becoming an instrument of good in his uncle's family. He accordingly anxiously turned his thoughts towards Berkshire, looking forward with pleasure to his departure.

At length the day arrived, when with a bleeding heart

he took leave of the comte and comtesse, and, being accompanied only by his servant, quitted Paris by the Barrier de l'Etoile. There stopping for a moment within the gateway, and looking back from the eminence on which this gate is situated, through the long avenue which is terminated by the ancient palace of the Tuilleries, he was occupied for a short space with many confused and bitter thoughts, till, at length, being wholly overcome by them, he hastily turned away; and, as he brushed the tears from his eyes, exclaimed, "Oh, Victor! Victor! Oh, my Virginie! Oh, my sister!"

We will pass over the few difficulties which Clermont encountered in his voyage home, (difficulties which were principally occasioned by the state of variance in which the two countries were at that time,) and we will introduce our traveller again to the reader's notice at the moment when, having alighted from a post-chaise at Mr. Charlton's garden-gate, he proceeded up the narrow gravel walk, just about the hour of twilight, on a December evening, and saw through the window his beloved old friend siting in his study beside a bright fire, and meditating probably on some passage of Scripture which he had been reading, as an open Bible was lying on his table.

This simple and interesting picture of Christian peace, which Clermont instantly contrasted with that dreadful scene that he had witnessed within the walls of La Morgue, a scene which was ever present to his mind, was so touching to the dutiful and affectionate youth, that he speedily ran forward towards the hall, and was, a moment afterwards, in the arms of his paternal friend. "My son! my son!" exclaimed the old gentleman, as he pressed his Clermont in his arms, "now, now, may I adopt the words of Jacob—*Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.*" (Gen. xlvi. 30.)

From that period, Clermont again became a constant inmate of Mr. Charlton's house; and though he was ordained soon after his return to England, as he was so happy as to procure a curaty in the immediate neighbourhood of his friend's house, his duties as a minister produced no necessity for their separation.

The dreadful scenes which Clermont had beheld in France afforded subjects of frequent conversation between himself and Mr. Charlton: and, on these occasions,

the old gentleman failed not to point out that all these horrors were the consequence of infidelity, the hardening and dreadful effects of which are such as to produce a hell in the mind of every miserable individual who is under its influence. "What then, my Clermont," he would add, "what should be our feelings of gratitude for that distinguishing favour which has made us to differ from the mass of infidels with which this world abounds! For all men are naturally infidels: all live in infidelity, till the Lord the Spirit convinces them of their unbelief. And though every unbelieving individual does not run to the extremes of profligacy and blasphemy which you witnessed in your own unhappy country, yet all are naturally enemies of God and haters of the light of divine truth, infidels in practice, and profligates in thought and feeling."

The last account that we heard of these persons, whose history we have given at some length, stated, that the comte had returned to Paris, and was become, apparently, a royalist, though really he was dissatisfied at the overthrow of the emperor and the restoration of the royal family; and Clermont, with the full approbation of Mr. Charlton, was preparing to go over to France, in order, if the Lord should permit him, to fulfil the resolutions which he had made while leaning on the parapet of the Pont Neuf, on that miserable morning which fixed for ever the fate of the guilty and miserable Virginie.

There was a general sadness diffused over the countenances of the little party, when the lady of the manor ceased to read; but, as the evening was very far advanced, few comments were made upon the story, and the meeting was, as usual, concluded by prayer.

*A Prayer for an abiding Sense of the Presence of God, and for that holy Fear which is the Beginning of Wisdom.*

"O THOU infinitely great, incomprehensible, and glorious Lord God Almighty, we humbly beseech thee to inspire our minds with the continual sense of thy presence. The fear of thee is indeed the beginning of wisdom; and we pray thee to restrain us by this holy fear, until

we arrive at that blessed state in which it shall be crowned by perfect love.

"In our parental connexions on earth we find the emblem of that spiritual relation to thee, O our God, wherein alone consists our safety and our peace. Thou only, O Lord, art acquainted with that which is for our good: the clouds of ignorance obscure our minds; we are altogether unable to distinguish between that which is good and that which is evil; our feet are ever prone to stray in the paths of darkness, where snares and dangers encompass us on every side. But if we keep thee as our guide, we have no occasion for fear; we are assured, that, in following the guidance of thy providence, we shall finally reach the abodes of peace, and that, if we forsake our own dark ways and uncertain paths, we shall, sooner or later, be delivered from every difficulty.

"Our vile natures and depraved affections render it impossible for us to think of thee as we ought to think, or to love thee as thou oughtest to be loved, or to comprehend and appreciate thy glorious nature and attributes: nevertheless we have light sufficient to enable us to discern our own natural blindness and weakness; and we, therefore, pray thee, for the sake of Him who died for us, to charge thyself with all our concerns. Leave us not to ourselves, O our God. Constrain us to go on in the way of holiness. Uphold us by thine own right arm. Hedge our paths, though it be with thorns, to the right and to the left; and preserve us from the dreadfully presumptuous offences of those who despise thy providence, who reject thy government, and who fearlessly pursue the dictates of their own unbelieving and evil inclinations; who walk in the paths of sin, and finally receive the punishment due to their offences.

"Wherever thy inspiring presence is, O God, there thy saints enjoy their heaven. The martyr has rejoiced in thee even at the stake; and holy gladness has filled the hearts of thy children when their frail bodies have been writhing under the tortures of temporal death. But who can conceive the horrors which thy absence inflicts on those who wilfully reject thy offers of mercy? who can describe the darkness and misery of the stubborn unbeliever? In what does hell itself consist but in the eternal absence of God? and what is heaven itself

more than the uninterrupted sense of his presence, parental favour, and tender love?

"Thou, O our God, art indeed every where present—*If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.* To fly from thy presence is indeed impossible: but as the sun, which shines on all the visible creation, exhales only infectious fogs and pestilential vapours from the putrid marsh; so, in the heart of the unregenerate man, the idea of God's authority would excite only horror, confusion, and misery. The evil soil rejects its kindly influences: it converts the breath of morn into blight and blasting, and the rays of light into lurid vapour; and it thus perverts that which constitutes the happiness of the blessed, into the means of more terrible endless misery, despair, and eternal death. O Almighty Father, leave us not therefore, we humbly supplicate thee, to our own erroneous devices; leave us not to ourselves, either to choose our own lot, or to fabricate our own schemes of happiness. Control our wills; subdue our passions; rein us in as with bit and bridle; leave us not, even for a moment, to our own misjudging minds; save us from the enemy who is able fully to destroy us, even from ourselves; and make us the blessed subjects of that great work of salvation which was ordained by thee ere yet the world began, with such effect, that, having been chosen by God the Father, justified through God the Son, and regenerated by God the Holy Ghost, we may be made partakers of everlasting glory in the world to come.

"And now to thee, O thou all-glorious and invisible Lord God Almighty, be ascribed all glory and honour, for ever and ever. Amen."

# CHAPTER XXIV.

Q. What is thy Duty towards thy Neighbour?

A. My Duty towards my Neighbour, is to love him as myself, and to do to all Men as I would they should do unto me. To love, honour, and succour my Father and Mother. To honour and obey the King, and all that are put in Authority under him. To submit myself to all my Governors, Teachers, spiritual Pastors and Masters. To order myself lowly and reverently to all my Betters. To hurt Nobody by Word or Deed. To be true and just in all my Dealings. To bear no Malice nor Hatred in my Heart. To keep my Hands from Picking and Stealing, and my Tongue from Evil-Speaking, Lying, and Slandering. To keep my Body in Temperance, Soberness, and Chastity. Not to covet nor desire other Men's Goods; but to learn and Labour truly to get mine own Living, and to do my Duty in that State of Life unto which it shall please God to call me.

It was now the beginning of autumn, and the days were, therefore, visibly shortening. The sun was setting behind the forest trees which adorned the verge of the western horizon when the youthful party assembled again in the beloved apartment at the manor-house. The lady of the manor looked round upon her pupils with approving satisfaction on this occasion; and having accosted them in her usually affectionate manner, she proceeded to point out what was to be the subject of their discourse on that evening. "This subject is furnished, my dear young people," she said, "by that part of the Catechism which treats of our duty to our neighbour; and we will, if you please, commence our employment by repeating that clause of the Catechism which describes this duty.

"'My duty towards my neighbour, is to love him as myself, and to do to all men as I would they should do unto me. To love, honour, and succour my father and mother. To honour and obey the king, and all that are put in authority under him. To submit myself to all my governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters. To order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters. To hurt nobody by word or deed. To be true and just in all my dealings. To bear no malice nor hatred in my heart. To keep my hands from picking and stealing, and my tongue from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering. To keep my body in temperance, soberness, and chastity. Not to covet nor desire other men's goods; but to learn and labour truly to get mine own living, and to do my duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call me.'

"It is not my intention," continued the lady, "to illustrate to you, clause by clause, that which I have just repeated; for in so doing I should necessarily go over the same ground which we have already travelled, in our considerations of the Commandments; but I shall take occasion to exhibit to you my views concerning both what ought to be the state of our feelings towards our fellow-creatures, and also what should be the result of these feelings, under three different heads, as follows: viz. what are our duties to our equals, our duties to our inferiors, and our duties to our superiors. And, inasmuch as I consider that, for the accomplishment of my object in promoting your benefit, example is better than precept, being at once more likely to be understood, to be remembered, and to be felt, I hope to read to you a short story on each of these subjects; in which several narratives I shall endeavour to point out what that especial feeling is, which operates in man's heart as the chief hindrance of a just and proper conduct towards our neighbour.

"This feeling is no other than that inordinate love of self that is common to every unregenerate man, and by which all his affections are excited and directed towards one object, whereby all his professed duties towards God are converted into eye-service, and his heart is rendered cold, callous, and dead with respect to the welfare of his fellow-creatures.

"Self, my dear young people," continued the lady, "is, as I have repeatedly told you, the idol of man; and it is the peculiar and special province of the work of grace to dethrone this idol, and to restore the Almighty to his place in the heart. It is easy enough to perceive the power of self in common characters, especially in cases where good manners afford no cloak for concealing its deformities; but it is lamentable to observe its influence among professors of religion, and to be constrained to confess its power in ourselves, even after the work of grace in our hearts is, we trust, begun. But, as I hope that you will find all that it is necessary to say on this subject in the narratives which I have provided, I shall proceed to read my first without delay."

The lady of the manor then, opening a small manuscript book, read as follows.

## EYE SERVICE.

"I shall make no apology for what I am about to do; because it is not to please, but I trust to profit, that I am induced to enter into the particulars of my history, and to relate those circumstances by which I have been brought, at the close of my days, to lift up my eyes to heaven, to bless the Most High, to praise and honour Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom from generation to generation; in comparison of whom all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; for he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? (Dan. iv. 34, 35.)

"On looking back upon my past life, it appears to me that the Holy Spirit of God has been dealing with me for many years; and my reason for concluding this is, not from any advancement which I have made in piety, but because that for several years past I have had frequent and sometimes clear and unquestionable views of my sins. I therefore venture to infer that my total blindness had ceased long before any thing like the gracious fruits of repentance began in the least degree to appear. This view of the case is, however, far from being flattering to my feelings; for it is evident from thence that my growth

in grace, even if I have grown at all, has been remarkably slow; and that few persons, after having such strong convictions as I have had, ever allowed themselves to continue so long in the subsequent practice of sin. But to quit these reflections, and to leave my history to speak for itself.

"It is necessary for me, in order that I may make my story clear, to give my reader some little history of my family for two generations back. My grandfather was a wealthy merchant; and, on his retiring from business, he purchased a handsome mansion-house, situated in a beautiful village in Berkshire. There he died, leaving my grandmother, with two daughters, coheiresses, the younger of whom was my mother. Both these daughters married: the elder to a counsellor in London; and the younger to a gentleman in the West Indies. And both of them also died early: the elder about four years after her marriage; and the younger when I, her only child, was about fourteen years of age.

"My poor mother had brought me up with care, and had procured for me every advantage which the country would allow. I continued with my father for more than three years after my mother's death: but upon his purposing to marry again, I was sent to England, to my grandmother, who had long desired to see me, and who was a person in every respect qualified for the charge of me.

"I was seventeen when I arrived in England; on which, I proceeded immediately to my grandmother's dwelling, which, as has been already stated, was situated in a beautiful village in Berkshire.

"Those persons who have seen England only, can form but imperfect ideas of the scenery of other countries; and, on the contrary, those who have never beheld our happy island, can have but incorrect conceptions of the perfect neatness and elegance of some of those little villages in England, near which a few genteel and opulent families reside, who, by their active benevolence, and refined taste, seem entirely to chase sordid poverty and coarseness even from the dwellings of the poor. There is, indeed, no country perhaps in the world which exhibits scenery at once more beautiful and striking than the West India Islands, where the luxuriant foliage of the

tropical climate is employed for the decoration of steep hills, deep valleys, and precipices of the most abrupt and sublime appearance; where the ocean often presents a noble feature in each view; and where blue mountains in the remote distance constitute such a back-ground as the most daring imagination would hardly presume to supply.

"Accustomed, however, as I had been, from my very infancy, to behold these wonders of creation, and not only to behold, but to admire them; I, nevertheless, could not help being struck with the smiling beauty of the scenery of Berkshire, and the elegant neatness of the shrubbery and the exterior of my grandmother's house, when, after having been driven along for a considerable way through a rural street, we approached the gates of her garden. I still recollect, with a kind of pathetic pleasure, the scene which presented itself, while we were waiting for a moment at the gate of the garden as I was in the post-chaise in which I had arrived thither from town. It was the beginning of summer: the time was evening; and innumerable shrubs and flowers in full bloom perfumed the air with a delicious fragrance. All the windows of the large old-fashioned mansion were open, and through a wide bow-window, just opposite to the gate, I could distinguish my grandmother sitting, dressed as a widow, but a little drawn back; and before her, nearer to the window, were two young people, the one a female rather younger than myself, sitting down, and the other a youth, somewhat older, standing before her. These two last mentioned seemed speaking to each other as we drove up; and the sweet animation and artless expression of their blooming countenances are still imprinted in the liveliest colours on my memory.

"At the sight of the carriage they all started up, and in a moment afterwards I found myself kneeling at the feet of my grandmother, and clasped in the arms of my cousin Lucy.

"I should have told you before, that my aunt, when dying, left two daughters; the elder of whom, whose name was Selina, had been educated under her father's eye, by a governess in Town, and the younger, who was a mere infant at her mother's death, by my excellent grandmother. This was the little girl to whom I was

introduced on my first arrival in Berkshire. Her name, as I before said, was Lucy, and such had been the divine blessing upon the pious care of my grandmother, that this young creature exhibited the finest specimen that I ever saw of all that was lovely, admirable, and desirable in youth. She was about fourteen when we first met; and there was such a sunshine of cheerfulness diffused on her countenance, such a charming composure on her polished brow, such a brilliancy and clearness of health spread over her whole face and neck, such freshness and innocence in her manner altogether, that it seemed almost impossible, in looking upon her, to criticise a single feature, or to enquire into the means by which she so suddenly secured the admiration of all who saw her.

"It was impossible for me to behold this charming young creature without feeling that I had never seen any thing like her before: but my emotions of admiration and of love, for I could not help being strongly inclined towards her, were not without other feelings too often mingled with admiration; and I had scarcely risen up from my kneeling posture at my grandmother's feet, and taken my seat by her side on a sofa, before I fell into some very uneasy reflections, of the nature of which I shall take occasion to speak at a future time.

"My grandmother embraced the earliest opportunity, after she had ordered some refreshment for me, and also made some enquiries respecting my journey, to introduce to my notice the young gentleman before mentioned. He had withdrawn himself to the further end of the room during the first moments of my arrival; but on my grandmother calling him, and addressing him by the name of Henry, he came forward, blushing as he drew near, and exhibiting a countenance that had much of the same unaffected, open, and cheerful expression which I had already so greatly admired in Lucy.

"'Henry Selwyn,' said my grandmother, naming him to me as he came up to us: 'an adopted child of mine; son of a dear friend. You must love him, Caroline, as Lucy does; you must count him a brother; you have never had a brother, my love; Henry is to be as a brother to you.'

"While my grandmother spoke, I observed Lucy's eyes sparkle; and she looked at me as if in confirmation of

all that my grandmother said, and as much as to say, 'Yes, Caroline, you must love him; it is quite necessary that you should.'

"This ceremony being over, and the tea-equipage now appearing, we all gathered round the table in the bow-window; and I should have felt completely happy, could I have divested myself of those detestable selfish feelings which have tormented me all my life. O, sin! sin! how impossible would it be to be happy in heaven itself, otherwise than in a state of freedom from sin!

"It is scarcely possible to conceive any situation on earth more replete with circumstances of joy and comfort than mine was at the period of which I speak. I had just terminated a long, fatiguing, and dangerous voyage. I had indeed lost a parent some time ago; but I had just found another, in whom I saw again all that I had loved, honoured, and cherished in my departed mother. I had, moreover, just reached a home where every comfort and every elegance were indeed assembled, and I had just found such a companion as was calculated to make my life most delightful: but in the very attractions of this companion I discovered that which embittered all my happiness.

"I possessed indeed sufficient self-command to conceal from every common observer, all those feelings of envy and selfishness, which I even now at this remote period am almost ashamed to reveal to the world, although I expect that no one will read these memorials till after my death. Nevertheless, it would be very difficult to describe the workings of my mind while I sat at the tea-table on this the first evening of my arrival at my grandmother's.

"I remember that, though occupied in talking upon other subjects, I was all the time busily engaged in comparing myself with Lucy, and in balancing certain advantages which I fancied that I enjoyed, against those beauties which I too plainly perceived to be in her possession. I busied myself also in thinking how far Henry Selwyn liked her, what might be the nature of his feelings towards her, and whether it might not be possible for me to make him like me as well, or better.

"My mother had not neglected to inculcate religious principles upon my mind; I therefore was not without

some idea, all this time, that the feelings which I was indulging were wrong. But this idea was a confused one: and certain it is, that I then by no means saw the atrocious and hateful tendency of those selfish principles which I encouraged; otherwise, I surely should have striven to employ such means as might have set me free from them. For although, sometimes, in cases even of very advanced Christians, lest they should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations, there may be given to them a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet them; yet, if they beseech the Lord, that it may depart from them, he will make his grace sufficient for them, that his strength may be made perfect in their weakness. (2 Cor. xii. 7—9.) But I do not remember that at that time I ever made any strong effort, or that I indeed used any means, to overcome these feelings: but, on the contrary, I allowed my mind to be continually occupied by myself and my own concerns, either in one way or other, till I brought upon myself my own punishment. But enough of this for the present.

"I went to bed early, and slept till late the next morning. The family had breakfasted when I awoke; and, on opening my eyes, I was surprised to see Lucy sitting at the foot of my bed, sewing as busily as if she had to earn her bread by her needle. She was so intent upon her work, that, when I first opened my eyes, she did not perceive it. At the sight of her, those uneasy feelings which had subsided during the night again revived, and I again shut my eyes; but still I beheld her in fancy, dressed as she was, in a simple white frock, without any ornament but her shining hair knotted on the back of her head. After a few moments I opened my eyes again, and endeavouring to seem pleased to see her, 'O, Lucy!' I said, 'are you there? and what are you so busy about? You seem working for your very existence.'

"'O yes, my dear Caroline,' she answered, 'I am indeed in a great hurry; I have not a minute to lose. I am making a shirt for a poor old man. Henry Selwyn brought it to me yesterday, and enquired if it could be possibly finished this evening; because we are then going, about some other business, to the place where the old man lives. It is a lovely walk through the beech woods, only two miles.'

"'And so,' I said, 'Henry is to accompany you in this walk?'

"'Yes, to be sure,' she said, looking at me with some surprise, 'he always goes with us when he is at home.'

"'Who do you mean by us?' I asked.

"'Grandmamma and me,' replied Lucy. 'Grandmamma goes in her little pony chair, and I and Henry walk by her: and it is so pleasant!'

"'I dare say it is,' I answered, 'very, very pleasant.'

"Lucy echoed the word pleasant with the utmost glee, and went on with her work. 'How quickly your fingers move, Lucy!' I said.

"'O yes,' she answered, 'they must move quickly, or they will not have done their task. But I will fetch your breakfast,' added this sweet little girl, and throwing down her work on the bed, she was out of the room in a moment.

"When Lucy returned with my breakfast on a tray, I said, 'My dear, why do you do this yourself? Why did not you ring for a servant?'

"'O, because,' she answered, playfully, and as if it were a matter of no moment, 'because I liked to wait upon you myself. But I must not lose time; I must go to my work again; and I shall be ready to run for any thing that you may want.'

"'She looks pretty, very pretty,' I thought to myself, as I was eating my breakfast; 'and though she is so simple, I never saw her do an awkward thing. But I dare say that she does not know much. I have no doubt that she has been brought up in a plain way. I dare say that she has no accomplishments.' This conjecture was pleasing to me; especially as I had not many myself: the climate and the state of the country in which I had been educated not being favourable for these matters. I thought, however, that I would ask her what she knew; and I hoped to have such answers as would please me. 'Lucy,' I said, 'have you learned music?'

"Without raising her head from her work, she answered in the affirmative, adding something respecting her work, quite foreign to my question.

"I took no notice of the latter part of her speech; but enquired if she had learned long, and whether she was far advanced.

"All that I could discover from her answer was, that, whatever attainment she had made in music, it was evident that she did not at all know how to appreciate her own merits. I questioned her then relative to some other branches of instruction: her answers concerning which still left me in perplexity; and the next idea that occurred to me was, that she wanted sense. This thought was replete with satisfaction to my envious mind: and, while full of it, I rang for a servant, was assisted to get up, and was led by Lucy to the room in which my grandmother spent her mornings. Here, in this room, which was in a retired part of the house, and which opened towards a shadowy part of the garden, I saw a musical instrument, and several music-books, several drawings of my cousin's, and a variety of other things, which proved to me that, whatever talents my cousin might have, much pains had been taken with her education. Here also were many books, and several chests and cabinets, some of which, as I afterwards found, contained garments for the poor; and over the mantle-piece there was a picture of my aunt and mother when they were little children.

"I sat here during some time, giving my grandmother various accounts of things that I had learned abroad; till, suddenly, Lucy proclaimed with triumph the completion of her task, and ran out of the room to perform some little jobs which she had postponed for this great work.

"'You see, my dear,' said my grandmother, as soon as my little cousin was gone out, 'how industrious Lucy is. There is one thing, my Caroline, particularly admirable in her; indeed I might say that there are many things. But that for which I chiefly admire her, is that she appears to be less occupied by self than any young person that I ever met with. It is remarked by those who know human nature best, that there is no part of life during which persons are more selfish, than they are from that period of childhood when they have ceased to hang upon the parent with infant helplessness, until the time when they themselves begin to feel the strength of conjugal and parental affection. Old people are often supposed to be particularly selfish: but there is scarce an old person living who does not take thought for the welfare of some son or daughter, some grandchild or

nephew, some dog or cat. But young people, at the age of which we speak, often care for nothing under the sun but themselves. And hence the uneasiness and fretfulness that we see in so many children under a tender parent's roof. But your dear cousin Lucy is a remarkable instance of the reverse of all this. I never saw another young creature like herself, so invariably and continually occupied in doing good to others, without any self-preference: and that without parade and ostentation; for I have never allowed her to be praised for well-doing, and I indeed have, to the utmost in my power, preserved her from all flattery.'

"I was not altogether in a mood to relish these praises bestowed on my little cousin, and, as you may suppose, I endeavoured to console myself with the notion, that my grandmother might perhaps be somewhat partial to the child whom she herself had brought up.

"While I was meditating on this matter, and thus giving myself a vast deal of trouble to reconcile my mind to the excellencies of Lucy, (which, after all, I could not help acknowledging,) I did not consider that the world is wide enough for all the creatures that the Almighty has placed in it, and that no two persons' interests would ever interfere, if each would strictly pursue the path peculiarly appointed by Providence. And, as I was thus employed, my grandmother was called down to receive some titled ladies, who were come in a coach-and-four.

"These ladies had been ushered into the drawing-room, a large apartment, which my grandfather himself had furnished with great magnificence, and at the further end of which there was a fine finger-organ.

"My grandmother insisted upon taking me in her hand to receive these ladies, and I must confess, that although I had always been used to good company, I was, nevertheless, somewhat abashed to find myself in the presence of real nobility. As I was not, however, called upon to speak, and as my grandmother possessed all the dignity and composure requisite for the occasion, I might have contrived to sit out the time of the visit with equanimity, had I been so disposed: but I was no sooner seated by my grandmother in the august circle, than my restless mind began its usual exercise, which, in the present instance, was that of comparing myself with the

ladies before me; and, as a lively state of selfish sensibility is as liable to depression as to exaltation, I fancied that I lost greatly by the comparison. I became, in consequence, agitated, confused, and ashamed: and a question being suddenly proposed to me concerning the West Indies, I addressed the lady who sat next me by the title of Sir, I called the east west, and the north south; and, after making several other blunders, was obliged to leave my grandmother to finish my speech.

"It now became a point of politeness to spare my confusion by not noticing me any further, and this politeness was well understood; for a new subject was instantly started, by one of the ladies speaking of a very beautiful hymn which she had just procured from a friend, and expressing a wish that she could hear it upon the fine organ then in the room.

"All eyes were immediately fixed upon me; but, on my grandmother saying that I had not been used to an organ, and the same plea being, also, urged by some of the ladies present, my grandmother rang the bell, and sent for Lucy.

"In a few minutes, the sweet child came in, dressed exactly as I had seen her early in the morning. She entered courtesying; and on being informed of what was required of her, she went calmly up to the instrument, and played the hymn, which was placed before her, accompanying it with her voice in a manner equally sweet and simple: after which, being dismissed by my grandmother, she walked quietly along the room, courtesied at the door, and disappeared.

"As soon as she was gone, the superior of the ladies, as she appeared to be, laid her hand on my grandmother's arm, saying, 'Indeed, Mrs. Thornton, you are too hard upon us, not to allow us to say one word to your little granddaughter for the charming treat that she has given us, not only to-day, but also many times before.'

"Every one then present spoke in praise of Lucy, commending her voice, her simple and interesting manner, her charming countenance, and her readiness to oblige.

"My grandmother bowed, and seemed pleased, but said nothing: on which, the superior of the visiters re-

marked, that it was the unaffected simplicity of this little girl's character which rendered all her other excellencies so striking. 'In the first circles,' added she, 'it is considered the utmost perfection of high breeding to seem artless, easy, and elegant; it is a perfection which few can attain, and which, when acquired, is irresistibly attractive. But your Lucy has it without effort; and there is a calmness and a modest dignity in her manner, together with a sweetness, which the utmost polish of art could never give her. It must, I am convinced, Mrs. Thornton, be the effect of a fine and well-ordered mind.'

"'It is the effect of piety, Lady ——,' said my grandmother. 'Lucy is a humble and pious child; she thinks humbly of herself, and highly of those about her; she is careless of her own comforts, but eager to promote those of others: and thus, without seeking happiness, she finds it, for she is the happiest of human beings. She has never been fed with praise, and therefore does not need it; and she is taught, when she has been enabled to do well, to give all the glory to God.'

"'Well,' replied the lady, 'I do not much understand your system of education, Mrs. Thornton; but I admire the result of your labours above all things:' and the visiters, on her so saying, arose, and departed. After which, I followed my grandmother into the dining-room, where we found Henry and Lucy both engaged in packing a basket, in which certain articles were placed preparatory to our evening excursion.

"I was surprised on finding that Lucy made not the most distant reference to the hymn, the ladies, or the organ. I expected every moment to have heard her say, 'O dear, grandmamma, I was so frightened when you called me in before those ladies! I did tremble so! and I never saw the hymn before! How did I behave? was I terribly out of tune?' &c. &c. But no, not a word escaped on the subject, and Lucy seemed to be wholly absorbed in the charming prospect of the evening's amusement.

"While the servants were laying the cloth, my grandmother sat down, had the basket brought to her feet, and employed Henry Selwyn and Lucy to fetch and carry what was further requisite to be put into it. There was tea, sugar, bread, butter, and cream; a roll of linen for

one poor creature, a little frock or cap for another, a book for another, a little wine for another; with a thousand etceteras which I could not remember; and such running backwards and forwards, such shoving and packing by Henry, such arranging and contriving on the part of my grandmother, and such animated interest in the countenance of Lucy, that I thought I never before in my life saw three such happy beings.

"At table, nothing was talked of but our intended expedition; and about an hour after dinner, the pony-carriage being brought up to the door, my grandmother got into it, and we set out with our basket.

"I had been with marooning parties in the West Indies, where persons go out, and, taking provisions with them, spend a day in the woods; but these expeditions gave me but little idea of the charming liberty and interest of an excursion of this kind in England. Our way lay through an extensive beech wood. We sometimes diverged a little from the carriage-road, and stepped aside into some of the narrow wood walks; but we seldom went out of sight or hearing of the pony-carriage. Sometimes, in our progress, we came near to certain lovely cottages, the inhabitants of which my grandmother knew by name. By these she was accosted with extreme delight; and I found that there was not a house by which we were to pass for which she had not some token of remembrance.

"On the occasion of this my first walk in England, I heard the cuckoo for the first time. The notes of this bird struck me very forcibly as being something entirely different from every thing that I had ever heard before, and conveyed to my mind such an idea of tranquillity, solitude, and a rural life, as I can hardly describe.

"I was rather fatigued by the time that we arrived at the end of the wood and entered upon one of those little neat greens or commons, surrounded by houses, now, indeed, so seldom seen, but formerly so general. Here, passing through a gate in a quickset hedge, we arrived at the porch of an old half-timbered cottage, where an aged man and woman received us, and where tea was presently provided for us from the contents of the basket. But while the water was boiling, Henry Selwyn proceeded about a quarter of a mile further, to deliver the shirt

which Lucy had made to the person for whom it was intended, and Lucy set off another way to visit a little school in the green, which she patronized. In the mean time, being little accustomed to walking, I sat with my grandmother till their return.

"While alone with my grandmother, I recollect that she fell into some serious discourse; yet, though serious, its tendency was cheerful. 'Well, my dear,' she said, 'what a happiness is this, to have the daughters of my children with me! I could fancy almost that I had my own beloved ones again: but I shall have them again,' she added, with spirit; 'they are not lost to me. When the Lord would make up to Job all that he had suffered, he gave him possessions of *twice as much as he had before*, but he added unto him only the same number of children which he previously had; thus intimating, that although the rest of his substance had utterly perished, his children still remained, and would again be restored to him. A sweet reflection this, my child, to a bereaved parent.'

"My grandmother remained silent for a few minutes after making this remark, and then said, 'O, my Caroline, this world is confessedly a world of trials; nevertheless, it is also provided with consolations for those who will cease to make self their idol, and who can patiently and meekly rest upon the help and promise of their Saviour. How have I laboured with my dear Lucy, in order to draw her off from the love of self, to excite her feelings for others, and to render her open and sincere in all her dealings! My daughter, always consider self as one of the worst of your enemies, and learn to rejoice with those that rejoice, and to weep with those that weep; but seek not exclusively your own happiness in this world, desire no earthly distinctions, but habitually receive and enjoy, with gratitude and humility, the blessings which are bestowed upon you in your passage through life. To-morrow this worn-out frame of mine may fall to pieces and sink into the grave, but to-day will I rejoice in the visible glories of my God on earth, and I will exult in the prospect of my salvation in heaven.'

"In this manner the pious old lady continued to converse, and she seemed almost to have wrought my mind into her own heavenly frame, when I perceived Henry

Selwyn and Lucy approach nearly at the same time, but in such contrary directions, that it appeared to me very plainly they could not have been together while absent. At the sight of each other, they seemed mutually to quicken their pace, and they met precisely at the garden-gate, on the top of which Henry placed his hand first, and held it fast while he spoke to Lucy. Their cheeks, particularly Henry's, were flushed with their recent exercise. He had taken off his hat in order to cool himself, and his brow being now bare and exposed, a remarkable degree of spirit and animation was imparted to his countenance as he stooped to speak to Lucy. 'This brother and sister,' I thought, 'seem very fond of each other; I am sure he never will be so fond of me.' At the same moment, the garden-gate was opened, and Lucy came forward, followed by Henry; and they both set themselves down to the tea-table, while Lucy began to detail at length the little anecdotes of the school that she had visited; in doing which, she found so much to say, and to interest her auditors, and at the same time she looked so good-humoured and pretty, that I grew quite impatient, and thus, becoming really disordered from finding myself thrown so entirely into the back-ground, I got up from my chair, retreated to another at some distance, and, bursting into tears, complained of excessive fatigue.

"This manœuvre, had its desired effect. The old man, who had been blowing the fire to boil more water, threw down the bellows, and stood bolt upright. The old woman lifted up her hands, and exclaimed aloud. Henry Selwyn scalded his throat by swallowing his tea in too great haste. My grandmother was distressed, and looked at every one of us as if she was unable to conceive what all this could mean: and I for my part was perfectly satisfied. Every one was now occupied with me, instead of attending to Lucy; and that was, of course, highly gratifying to my selfishness. It now, however, became needful for me to carry on the farce which I had begun. I therefore sobbed, held my hand to my side, complained of fatigue, and should have thought it right to find it very difficult to get home, as the pony-carriage held but one person, and as my grandmother was unable to walk, had not the old man proposed to borrow a

neighbour's donkey, on which I was placed; and Henry, taking the bridle, I had the satisfaction to find that it was impossible for him to attend to any thing but me and my palfrey.

"And now, my gentle reader, you may picture to yourself our cavalcade as we returned, and fancy me talking to Henry about the West Indies and other matters, while he most gallantly led me forward through the wood, which was rather dark before we had cleared it. Lucy, in the mean time, following our steps, smilingly compared us to a company of gipsies.

"In this style we arrived at home; and my grandmother hastened me to bed, not at all suspecting how much of affectation and selfishness really existed under my supposed indisposition.

"Thus have I described with tolerable accuracy the employments of the first twenty-four hours that I spent at my grandmother's, and I have given my reader some little insight into my own character, and those of my friends.

"The next day was spent at home, in reading, working, and drawing. Henry Selwyn, I found, was fond of employing his pencil. He had learned at school, and he was teaching Lucy. My mother had given me also some instructions, but I had ceased to practise since her death. I, however, no sooner saw Lucy engaged in this employment, than I expressed a wish to join the party; a thing in itself for which no one could possibly blame me, for every effort which a young person makes to improve is laudable. But improvement was not my object: I felt that I never should draw, for I never had shewn any taste for it; but I could not bear to be left in the background with respect to any thing. Accordingly, I made a very humble and pretty petition to Henry Selwyn, in a sort of half playful, half petted way, begging him to teach me to draw, together with Lucy. And when seated at the table, with my paper before me, and my pencil in my hand, I made a thousand applications to him for little assistances: sometimes he was to lend me a penknife, then to cut me a pencil, then to shew me where to make the next stroke; then I called upon him either to encourage or blame, laughed at my own awkwardness, uttered little cries of astonishment, or sighed and pouted;

and, in short, played off all those tricks which self-conceited young people commonly employ to engross the attention of others.

"My grandmother was not in the room all this time, and Lucy seemed quite engaged with her work; but Henry Selwyn, who for his age appeared to be a remarkably manly and steady character, seemed for a while to be determined to treat me with that kind of cold and distant politeness which is best suited to keep in order such a character as mine then was: but, on my making some egregious mistake in my drawing, he uttered some boyish expression of displeasure, calling me stupid, or tiresome, or something to the purpose; on which, I arose from the table, retreated to a couch, leaned my head on my arm, and began to sob and cry.

"On seeing my tears, and fancying that he had been the cause of them, he seemed much perplexed. 'Dear Caroline,' he said, throwing down his pencil, and coming up to me, 'I hope I have not hurt your feelings: I beg a thousand pardons if I have. Pray, forgive me.'

"By this time, Lucy had desisted from her work, and was looking eagerly towards us. 'O,' I answered, 'I know that I am stupid; I know you never can teach me; I am not like Lucy; I have not had her advantages: but I will admire her at a distance, and I will trouble you no more with my incapacity.'

"'Caroline! don't speak in this way,' he rejoined, seeing my tears; 'come back to the table; if you do not wish to make me very unhappy, you will try again.'

"Thus he continued to plead, and with such earnestness, that I arose, and was led back by him to my seat, where, in a kind of affectionate manner which he had not yet used towards me, he placed the pencil in my hand, and begged me to make another trial of my skill.

"While all this was passing, Lucy was observing us; neither was I unmindful of her. At first she seemed quite at a loss to imagine what all this bustle was about; but presently judging of things according to their appearances, and fancying that I really had serious apprehensions whether I should ever be able to learn, her countenance suddenly lost its air of perplexity, the sunshine returned, and, running to a drawer near at hand,

she produced her first attempt at pencilling, and spread it open by mine, declaring, with exultation, that mine was better than hers, calling upon Henry at the same time to make the comparison.

"I felt for a moment the sweetness of Lucy's conduct; and I could not refrain, as she stood by me, from turning towards her, and clasping my arms round her neck. She seemed startled at this motion, particularly as Henry Selwyn was by, and I thought that she desired to remind me of his presence by a certain gentle glance of her eye towards him—a glance, however, which was instantly recalled by her eyes being fixed on the drawing before her.

"No occurrence worth noticing took place during the remainder of this day, which we spent entirely at home, it being rainy; nor can I remember any thing very particular for some days afterwards; though I doubt not that, in the interim, I gave many evidences of my real character, which was that of habitual devotedness to self: as about this time my grandmother called me into her closet, and addressed me in the following discourse, the substance of which she afterwards took the trouble of committing to paper for my use. She began this conference, by remarking to me that there were certain traits of my character which did not meet with her approbation: 'And, short, my dear,' she added, 'as our acquaintance has been, I consider it as my duty to speak to you with plainness, though it be with the risk of offending you.'

"I leave the reader to imagine how I started and reddened on hearing myself thus addressed, and how I was puzzled to conceive of what offence I could possibly have been guilty, to draw upon myself so serious a lecture. I had undoubtedly heard much of the depravity of human nature, and I should not have scrupled to confess that I partook of this depravity in common with all others of the human race in general; nevertheless, I was utterly amazed when my grandmother presumed to bring any specific charges against me: and she had scarcely ceased to speak, before I burst into a violent agony of weeping, exclaiming, in a kind of paroxysm of passion, that I considered myself as the most unfortunate creature on earth, to have offended my dear grandmamma, and

tnat before I had been one month under her roof. I then gave vent to various other pathetic exclamations, much to this purpose,—that it was the last thought that I ever could have entertained when I left the West Indies, that I should come to England to grieve and distress my poor dear grandmother. I then apostrophized my own mother, and burst again into an agony of tears. I expected, that, on witnessing this my grief, my grandmother would have melted into tenderness, and pressed me in her arms, perhaps calling me the dear and only representative of her departed Caroline. But nothing of this kind occurred. The old lady sat perfectly still, and spoke not again till I had recovered my composure, and had fallen into a kind of sullen humour, which succeeded my agony of passion, when I discovered that all my cries and exclamations had utterly failed of the effect that they were intended to produce.

"My grandmother then renewed her discourse, by setting before me a plain statement of what man's situation on earth would have been, had he not fallen from his original righteousness, and then comparing it with his present lost, undone, and ruined condition: adding this truth; that every faculty of the soul, the body, and the intellectual powers were become radically and entirely corrupt. 'The time was,' continued the venerable lady, 'ere yet man had fallen from his pristine glory, when all and each of his powers were as glorious and as free from sin, as they now are corrupt and depraved; his body then was beautiful, and his mind was formed after the moral image of his Maker; he was not liable to death, and his affections were upright and holy, not having received that perverse and fatal bent, which leads the unregenerate creature to call evil good and good evil, and to delight in the ways of wickedness rather than those of virtue. The only proper, just, and desirable object of man's supreme affections, is God. He may indeed love his neighbour, but this affection should be in subordination to that which he is to cherish towards his God. It is written, *He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.* (Matt. x. 37.) We are taught that the blessedness of heaven will consist in the union of all its glorious inhabitants under

one head; all being bound by one interest, all united in one common cause, all being continually engaged in one song of praise, one strain of everlasting harmony without a single discord, one eternal cry of "Glory, glory, glory, to Him who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." In those blissful regions, where salvation shall be for ever secured to its blessed inhabitants, no one will desire to appropriate honour to himself; the brightest archangel in the hierarchies of heaven would not dare, nay, would not wish to receive the praise of the meanest of the Lord's creatures: though crowned with everlasting glory, and clad in the robes of heavenly splendour, though endowed with Godlike wisdom, embellished with eternal youth, though glowing with angelic bloom, and endued with immortal strength; yet we know that such a one would have no other thought but to bring all his honours to the feet of his Saviour, and to cast his crown before the throne of his heavenly Master. Nay, more than this, we are taught that Christ, in his character as man, takes no glory to himself, but gives all the glory to the Father.—*Jesus answered, I have not a devil: but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.* (John viii. 49.) And yet presumptuous man, ruined, lost, fallen, and undone man, has no fears of this kind, no dread of placing himself, as it were, in the throne of God; and whenever he does not receive the praise of his fellow-creatures, he even presumes to demand, to extort it, and he feels himself mortified, dissatisfied, and injured, if he is not an object of general attention.'

"In this place my grandmother paused; and I remarked, that I still felt myself in the dark, and could not see how I was to apply to myself what she had just said to me.

"I thought that the old lady sighed on hearing this, but I was not quite sure. She, however, immediately replied, addressing me by my name in an affectionate manner, and pointing out to me, that when man fell, he utterly lost that love and respect for his Maker by which he had been originally actuated. 'His affections then,' said she, 'received a false direction; self became the idol of the passions; and from that period,' she added, 'every unconverted man continues devoted to self, eager for his own gratifications, anxious to push himself for-

ward into such situations as he considers honourable or pleasurable, and ready to sacrifice all other interests to what he conceives to be his own.'

"I remember, that, when my grandmother came to this part of our conversation, I began to form some little notion of what she was about, and to dread some more home pushes than any that I had yet received. She, however, spared me these, although I no longer doubted that she had made discoveries relative to my selfish and envious disposition which I should not have liked to have heard mentioned, and she proceeded to speak of the change which took place in the heart of man at his regeneration. She entered somewhat largely on the plan formed by the glorious Three in One for man's salvation, and on the peculiar work and effectual operations of the Holy Spirit in changing the heart. She pointed out, that the first work of God the Spirit was to humble the new-born creature, to convince him of unbelief, to empty him of self, and to restore the Almighty to his throne in the heart. She proceeded then to enter into some details on this part of her subject; and pointed out to me, that the converted man, as he advances nearer and nearer to the perfection of holiness, and is more and more changed into the image of Christ, becomes less and less occupied by self, more and more debased in his own eyes, and more tender and jealous of the honour of God.

"My grandmother then proceeded to remark the deplorable deficiency of many professing Christians, in the present-day, with respect to that spirit of self-abasement which appeared in some of the holy men of old time. 'How few of these characters,' said she, 'of whom we should hope better things, prove fully able to disentangle themselves from those feelings of self-love by which we are all so easily beset! These feelings actuate, at all times, and amidst all circumstances, many of those whom we would wish to think the excellent of the earth. In the pulpit, in the closet, at the altar, do they betray themselves; being more or less visible to the eye of the observer, according as the individual who is the object of observation has more or less skill and presence of mind in concealing them. Selfishness,' added the venerable lady, 'may be frequently hidden from the eye of man by courteous manners; it may be glossed over by art and

good taste; it may perhaps lie very deeply concealed, and may not be liable to excitements of an ordinary kind; it may discern the promotion of its own interests by its concealment: but while it is a living, active, and cherished principle, there is little reason to suppose but that it will, some time or other, discover its influence, to the confusion of the individual who indulges it, and the dishonour of the religion which he professes.'

"My grandmother then went on to say, that, upon a close inspection of my character, she had been apprehensive that the spirit of self-love natural to man reigned in my heart with unsubdued power, and that, consequently, there was reason to fear, that, although I might have attained an acquaintance with the history and doctrines of the Christian religion, I had still never experienced its power, inasmuch as where divine grace once commences an effectual work in the heart, the strong holds of self-love begin in some degree to be shaken.

"On hearing this, I renewed my weeping, and asked my venerable parent (with whom, by the bye, I was at that moment thoroughly incensed) to point out to me those particulars of my behaviour on which she had founded her judgment.

"She smiled, but it was with a smile of compassion, and she replied, 'My dear child, I have lived too long in the world, not to be able to read, with considerable accuracy, the lines of a youthful countenance. Humility and simplicity, my Caroline,' she added, 'possess certain characteristic marks which can never be mistaken where continued opportunity of observation is presented; while the contrary character also has its appropriate marks, which it would be equally difficult to mistake. Life is too short, my child, and death is at all times too near, to allow us to trifle with each other. I may give you temporary pain by my remarks, but I dare not withhold them; nevertheless, it is very difficult precisely to point out to you the various indications by which it has become evident to me that self is your idol, that you are seldom occupied by any other object, except as that object has reference to self, and that there are few if any occasions on which you forget self, and feel so far interested in the concerns of others, as to cease from anxieties on your own account.'

"I blushed exceedingly on hearing these words, and felt as if my grandmother were about to lay open every thought of my heart.

"The old lady observed my blushes, and made some apology for probing me so closely. 'My child,' she said, 'my connexion with you requires me to treat you with a freedom that I am not at liberty to use to others. But do not suppose that I consider my own heart to be any better than yours: for *as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man*. (Prov. xxvii. 19.) It is grace alone, my child, that makes any difference which may subsist between one and another, the free grace of God, bestowed by him according to his sovereign pleasure, without respect to the merits of the individual. And O, my daughter!' she added, clasping her hands with unfeigned fervency, 'may you become the subject of this grace! may the strong holds of self-love be overthrown within your breast! may the idol self be torn from his throne in your heart! and may the Almighty become the object of your supreme affections! Then, then, my child, I shall no longer see in you those capricious and affected airs which so greatly diminish your external gracefulness; I shall no longer see your eyes turned on all sides, as it were, to collect the suffrages of those about you; I shall no longer observe those little stratagems to obtain attention; but all will be serene within and lovely without.'

"My grandmother then concluded her discourse by an animated description of that peculiar and angelic beauty habitually diffused throughout the human countenance by the triumph of grace over the natural selfishness of the heart; a beauty that is wholly independent of the natural features, or of the tincture of the skin, yet such, when it is associated with youthful comeliness, as almost conveys to the imagination a faint idea of angelic excellence.

"'You are thinking of Lucy,' I exclaimed, as my grandmother ceased to speak: 'the description just suits her. Had I enjoyed Lucy's advantages,' I added, 'I might perhaps have resembled her.' Thus speaking, I again burst into an agony of tears.

"'I love my Lucy,' said my grandmother, solemnly; 'she is a blessed child; she will be a blessed child. But,

Caroline, my love, the world is wide enough for you and for Lucy also, and heaven is wider still.

"The manner in which these words were uttered, startled and even shocked me. 'What,' thought I, 'does my grandmother suspect!" She, however, added no more, but, rising and kissing me, withdrew to her closet.

"From the time of this conversation, which had taken place after dinner, I retired to my own room, where I spent an hour in bitter tears and sobs, considering myself (and delighting in the thought) the most unhappy creature in the world.

"There is in fallen man an intense desire of being somewhat extraordinary, something out of the common way. This feeling is often particularly ardent in unconverted young women, who, living in ease at home, are in want of some object with which to engage their energies. Hence are produced those countless numbers of would-be heroines, who desire to make it appear that they are constantly the objects of persecution on account of their beauty. It must, however, be remarked, that the heroines who are persecuted for their beauty are not the only, nor, indeed, in this age, the most usual species of heroines. Those who are persecuted for their religion, and those who experience severe spiritual trials, are at present the most abundant; and it is much to be feared that the profession of religion is now more frequently perverted to the promotion of vanity, than to the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan and the debasement of self; such is the depravity of man, and such is its effect of contaminating and poisoning all that it touches.—But to return to myself.

"While remaining alone in my room, I was engaged with many and various thoughts, and became convinced that I should utterly fail of being loved by my grandmother in the degree that Lucy was, unless I changed my mode of conduct, unless I appeared to be more serious, less devoted to myself, and more zealous for the service of the poor. Self-love was not backward in convincing me of the expediency of my seeming all this, and I therefore, without hesitation, determined to adopt and pursue this alteration in my practice; neither can I say, even to this hour, how far I was conscious of the duplicity of my in-

tentions: but I am rather inclined to think that I was not then in the least degree suspicious of myself, but that, if any one had questioned me concerning what was passing in my mind, I should have replied, that I had been repenting in consequence of the serious lecture given me by my grandmother. To leave, however, these various perplexities, and allow my reader to judge of me by facts, I proceed to remark, that when I heard the usual signal given for tea, I went down into the library, where we commonly took that meal, and where I had first met my grandmother and Lucy. But before I left my room, I remember that I looked in the glass, new modelled my hair, and perceived with pleasure that only such traces of my tears remained, as gave what I regarded as an interesting languor to my countenance; that unfortunate redness having disappeared from the tip of my nose which so sadly intrudes on the beauty of all weeping females who are not of truly heroic origin.

"On my entering the library, into which I walked with a languid step, I saw my grandmother seated with her usual composure on the sofa, busily engaged with her knitting, (for she supplied all the rheumatic poor in the village with warm stockings,) and Lucy and Henry Selwyn occupied about some concerns which I did not at first comprehend, but which were of such a nature that the whole centre of the room was littered by them; Henry kneeling on the floor, and exerting almost as much strength as would have enabled him to fell a tree, in packing up and closely tying in large sheets of brown paper certain articles delivered to him by the hand of Lucy, while she was continually making references to her grandmother, and giving directions to Henry, with a glee and animation which diffused over her cheeks a finer bloom than I had ever before seen in her. At the moment when I entered the door, she was offering to Henry a small parcel contained in cap-paper, and pointing out to him where it was to be placed; when he, turning aside a part of the paper, laughed, and said 'O, Lucy, Lucy! I will betray you; I will tell grandmamma.'

"'No, no, Henry,' she rejoined, 'no, you shall not; pray put up the parcel, and say nothing.'

"So saying, she was trying, with a gentle violence, to take the parcel out of his hand, when he, rising from

the ground on which he had been kneeling, and pushing aside his fine hair from his forehead, held up the parcel to the old lady, and exposed the flaxen head and lack-lustre blue eyes of a wooden doll; saying, at the same time, 'See, grandmamma; see how provident Lucy is for the happiness of little Annie.'

"The old lady smiled: and Henry turned towards his young companion with a look so full of tenderness mingled with admiration, as I had never before seen expressed in any countenance. Then, without adding another word, he returned to his employment, and Lucy resumed her wonted composure, together with that sweet expression of peace, which had been only slightly disturbed by the circumstance which I have described.

"The parcel was shortly afterwards completed, directed, and dispatched by the hand of some person who had been waiting for it; and we were presently all seated around the tea-table, where I hoped Henry Selwyn would find leisure to observe how pale and interesting I looked. I had no inclination to enquire into the circumstances concerning the parcel and the doll. As my reader, however, may not perhaps have the same motives as I had, for not desiring to dive into the particulars relating to the good works of Lucy, nor the same objection to enter into the description respecting them, I shall state, in as short an account as possible, that the parcel was for the use of a little child, the offspring of a poor beggar, who, in passing through the village, had died in a barn, and left an infant of a few months old, a lovely baby, that would probably have been consigned to perish in a workhouse, had not Henry Selwyn, then a boy of fifteen, chanced to see it, and undertaken, with the help of Lucy, to pay a poor honest cottager to rear it. This little creature was four years old at the time that I speak of, and was then maintained by its youthful guardians, assisted by my grandmother, at a little simple and happy boarding-school not very far distant.

"Having thus accounted for what I had seen, I return again to speak of myself, not doubting that you, my discerning reader, are fully persuaded, by this time, that self is to be the heroine of our tale.

"We had finished our first dish of tea before Henry happened to turn his eyes towards the side on which I

sat: but when he chanced to look that way, I thought that his attention rested on me somewhat longer than usual, and that he manifested an air of concern; on which I changed my posture, and affected to rouse myself, and appeared to endeavour to look cheerful.

"Our tea was scarcely over, when my grandmother and Lucy were called out, and I was left with Henry. He had taken up a book, and continued reading while the servants were taking out the tea-things; but this being accomplished, and the door shut, he laid down the book, went to the open window, and, gathering a sprig of jessamine from a tree which grew without the window, he brought it to me; and in a manner the most gentle, for the society of such females as my grandmother and Lucy had accustomed him to tender and humane feelings, he addressed me by my name, said he feared that I was not well, and asked if he could read to amuse me.

"In return for this, I began to shed tears; for the tears of those who are devoted to self are sometimes surprisingly ready on all those occasions whereby the selfish feelings are more or less affected; and I immediately embraced the resolution to make this young man, whom I had known so short a time, the confidant of my sorrows, though I was far, very far from intending to make him acquainted with the true state of my case.

"To this purpose, I informed him that my grandmother had declared herself displeased with me, because she did not see in me that seriousness which she discovered in Lucy. I then confessed it was true that I was in every respect far, very far inferior to Lucy; that I knew I should never be equal to her, never appear like her; that I looked up to her as an angel; and that I should be fully content only to follow her steps, however far distant: but that I had been unfortunate, in having lost my mother early; in having been brought up in a foreign country, &c. &c. with a great deal more to the same purpose, by which I hoped I had made myself appear to be the most injured and unhappy creature in the world, and that I had represented my grandmother's conduct as unreasonable and unkind.

"I had no means of judging, at that time, of the effect produced by my confessions on my young auditor, as my grandmother and cousin returned to the room immedi-

ately after I had done speaking. I saw, however, with pleasure, that he looked serious, and that he continued so during the rest of the evening.

"When I retired to my apartment at bed-time, I again began to meditate on my situation, and became increasingly convinced, that, in order to obtain and secure my grandmother's esteem, it was necessary for me to accommodate myself to her tastes more than I had hitherto done. I cannot say whether I precisely indulged any reflections on the power which I supposed to be invested in my grandmother of obliging one child more than another in her will; yet I can hardly think that this consideration was entirely without some weight upon my mind. But be this as it may, I saw that the people with whom I now associated had decidedly avowed themselves on the side of religion; and that they were exceedingly active in works of charity; and I perceived that I could do nothing better than to imitate them, at least in appearance. Being thus convinced of what appeared likely to promote my interest in a worldly point of view, I endeavoured to hide my own hypocrisy from myself, by trying to remember all that my mother had taught me of religion, and then endeavouring to fancy that I really was religious, and that I had always been so.

"Among the genteel families that occupied the village in which my grandmother resided, there were some, whose pretensions to strict morality were what the world would call unexceptionable; whose manners were elegant, whose tastes were refined, and whose liberality to the poor was truly commendable. These persons, however, being ignorant of the depravity of their hearts, and of their fallen and lost condition by nature, and their consequent need of the Saviour, entertained no fear of mingling with the world, and of trusting themselves amidst its dangerous allurements.

"The chief of these families was one of the name of Stephens. The lady herself was a widow—had been a beauty; and still, when rouged, and by candle-light, she conveyed no faint idea of what she had been in the height of her bloom. She had a handsome fortune, an elegant house, and four sprightly daughters; and few persons better understood the art of making a house agreeable to visiters of a worldly character than did this lady.

"My grandmother was on good terms with her, and often engaged her in works of charity: nevertheless, it was impossible for these two persons intimately to associate, because they had not one single principle in common, and they were, therefore, continually liable to clash whenever they attempted to converse on any other than the most ordinary subjects. It was, however, deemed right, by my grandmother, that the families should interchange visits once or twice during the year: and it happened, that one of these visits was to take place not long after the day on which I had been engaged in the above-mentioned conversation with the old lady.

"During the interval that elapsed between the time of this conversation and that of the visit, I had certainly fallen more into my grandmother's habits, and accommodated myself more decidedly to her views. I had devoted some part of my time every morning to such studies as she had recommended; I had taken my drawing-lessons, together with Lucy, under Henry Selwyn; I had made some efforts to work for the poor; and I had walked once or twice with my grandmother to see the little school which she supported in the village. All these things I imagined looked well; and I was, in consequence, pleased with myself: but whether my grandmother was satisfied with me or not, I could not tell. At any rate, however, she said nothing: and, as I before remarked, I was content with myself, especially as I believed that I had been growing in the good graces of Henry ever since I had made him a kind of confidant of my sorrows. With respect to Lucy, I could not tell whether I either gained or lost ground in her regards. She, from the first, had been cheerful, open, and affectionate: but though I had made several attempts at what I called gaining her confidence, I could never find myself any nearer my object: and I was at length brought to this persuasion, that she had no confidences to impart; a state of mind which I could by no means comprehend, without forming the conclusion, that, notwithstanding her blooming countenance, her eloquent blushes, and her animated expression, she was actually without a heart.

"But while things were in this state, the day arrived on which we were to visit Mrs. Stephens. On the morning of this day, my grandmother had a slight at-

tack of a rheumatic complaint, to which she was frequently subject, which prevented her from accompanying us to that lady's house; a circumstance which distressed Lucy very much, but which, I must confess, produced in me not the slightest regret: for since I had discovered that the old lady was so close an observer, I never had felt myself entirely at ease in her company.

"I had found out, by means of the servant who assisted in dressing me, that a party unusually large was expected at Mrs. Stephens's: I was, therefore, very solicitous to appear as well dressed as possible, and I consequently felt some difficulty in forming for my appearance a plan which might reconcile my newly adopted character of the sober and penitent Christian, with my ideas of true gentility and fashion, of which I had a variety of fancies and opinions, with which I could not resolve to part.

"I took the first opportunity which the morning afforded of being alone with Lucy, in order to ask her what she intended to wear in the evening. She made me repeat the question twice before she answered it, as if she really did not understand what I meant: and then, looking down upon her clothes, she replied, 'We must have on clean frocks.'

"On hearing this, I uttered a vehement exclamation, and said, 'Indeed, Lucy, I don't know what to make of you: you are the strangest creature in the world.'

"She lifted up her gentle eyes for a moment, and then went on with her work; and I imagined, from the long silence which immediately followed, that she was offended, till at length she herself broke the silence by making some remark respecting our grandmother, and telling me some anecdotes of our venerable parent's kindness to her in her childhood.

"Nothing was, therefore, to be made of Lucy: no ideas of what was proper, or of what might be expected in the appearance of the evening, were to be gathered from her. She was a character wholly inaccessible on these subjects. I therefore trusted to my own judgment; and, as soon as I had dined, went up to my own room, summoned the servant, and spent at least two hours in curling my hair, suiting my ribbons, and arranging my ornaments; and I had scarcely finished all

these preparations, having worked myself up by my solicitude to appear well into a glow and a tremor, when Lucy, perfectly cool and unembarrassed, appeared at my door, in a clean frock indeed, but without one additional decoration to what she wore every day. I now almost wished that every ornament, with which I had been so sedulously adorning myself, were sunk in the depths of the sea. I would have given all that I possessed for the simple, cool, and unembarrassed appearance of Lucy. But there was now no longer time for delay. Henry Selwyn was waiting below; and I was obliged to hurry down stairs after my cousin, and make the best of my way to Mrs. Stephens's house.

"I thought, that, when I appeared in the hall, Henry Selwyn's eye was caught with my figure: he certainly noticed me with some particularity; but what that particular look meant I could not understand. He, however, offered me his arm, while at the same time he took Lucy's hand with a kind of brotherly fondness, and placed it on his other arm; while she began to divert him with an account of some adventure either among the poor, or in her garden and poultry-yard, in which he seemed to take as lively an interest as herself.

"It was rather mortifying for a young lady in the state of mind of which I was then the subject, to be associated constantly with such characters as Lucy and Henry. When Lucy was not present, I could indeed make more of Henry. But, in her company, he was quite as childlike and simple as herself, and was ready to look grave or laugh, to play or work, precisely as she took the lead.

"We soon arrived at Mrs. Stephens's handsome house, and were introduced into a very elegant drawing-room, with windows down to the ground, opening on a lawn, smooth as velvet, beyond which appeared a cascade falling from a little height into a small pool, in the centre of which was the bronze statue of a water-nymph. The heights from which the cascade tumbled were covered with trees and shrubs; and in the darkest of one of its recesses, there appeared a grotto, in which were several couches of moss.

"The season being summer, the windows of the drawing-room were open, admitting from without the fra-

grance of innumerable flowers and aromatic plants, arranged in bow-pots on the lawn.

"So large and so gay was the party assembled in the drawing-room, that the idea of a little dance being intended was instantly suggested to my mind; and I was the more confirmed in this opinion when I perceived that most of the party consisted of young persons. As we entered, the lady of the house came forward to receive us with all that ease and apparent cordiality, which an acquaintance with genteel life commonly imparts; and after giving us a few moments of her attention, she led us to a sofa, where we were permitted to contemplate the scene before us in silence.

"I was no sooner thus left to myself, than I commenced my old employment in a new circle; which was that of comparing my own figure, such as I supposed it to be, with every other lady, young and old, in the room. I do not precisely recollect the result of these my comparisons on that occasion, excepting that I hesitated a little when my eye rested on Miss Harriet Stevens, who was at that time accounted one of the most dashing young ladies in Berkshire; and in this hesitation, I lost a little of my self-complacency. But I generally found, that these comparisons had the effect of either depressing me, so as to render me exceedingly awkward and embarrassed, or of elating me to an extreme, which, in another way, rendered me equally ridiculous.

"Miss Harriet, at the moment when my observation first rested upon her, was engaged in a very animated conversation with a young foreigner, who at that time resided in the neighbourhood. She was a little woman, and he a tall man. He stood up before her, and she was lounging back upon a sofa, and in an affected way looking up to him; but I thought her very interesting, because she wore in her ears extremely large gold hoops, which were then just come into fashion, and she could speak French with volubility. At length, while I was still looking at her, her name was mentioned, and some appeal was made to her by some person in the most distant part of the room: on which occasion, she took the opportunity of getting up, and running across the apartment, in a manner which I thought very pretty, but which really betrayed extreme affectation, she pushed

herself in between two young ladies, who were seated together, and, being followed by her Frenchman, a very loud and animated discussion of some unimportant matter took place in that corner of the room, and for some time attracted the attention of all the rest of the party. At length, the loud peals of laughter and the half-shrieks of the young ladies were somewhat hushed by the important business of taking refreshments, during which repast we saw a party of musicians seating themselves under a tree on the lawn. 'Symptoms of a dance,' whispered Henry Selwyn to me, 'are you a dancer, Miss Caroline?'

"Before I could answer, Mrs. Stephens approached, and, beckoning Lucy towards her, she said to her, in an under tone, but so loud, that we could distinctly hear her, 'We are going to have a little dance this evening, my dear: you have no objection, I am sure, my sweet Lucy.'

"'I, Madam!' said Lucy, with her usual simplicity, 'how could you think of such a thing?'

"'O, I am glad of it,' said Mrs. Stephens; 'but I understood that your grandmother is not fond of these things.'

"Lucy made no reply, but looked with her wonted composure and sweetness: on which Mrs. Stephens added, 'Then you and your cousin will not refuse to join us?'

"'I have never learned to dance,' replied Lucy; 'and, as my grandmamma is not here to be consulted, I would not wish to join in the amusement this evening. But I shall not want entertainment; so pray do not think of me, Madam: you know that I am always happy here; you are always so kind to me.'

"'You are a sweet creature, Lucy,' returned Mrs. Stephens, taking her hand, 'a dear little girl, and you always were such. Well, you shall not dance; you shall please yourself, and you shall help me to supply the refreshments.'

"'Yes,' said Lucy, smiling, 'yes, Madam; and I will do any thing else that you may think of.'

"A loud call upon Mrs. Stephens, as lady of the ceremonies, put a stop to any further conversation between her and Lucy: but at the same moment, the

smiling little creature was drawn away into another corner, by a party of young ladies, who, it seems, wished to introduce their brother to her as a partner.

"In the mean time, I observed that Henry Selwyn was watching his little companion very closely, and he then remarked to me, 'I shall be surprised if those girls persuade Lucy to dance: but be assured that they will if they can.'

"'Well,' I added, 'and what harm would there be if they could persuade her?'

"Henry started a little, as I thought, on my proposing this question, and then said, 'But you know that Lucy has not been brought up in that sort of way.'

"'Well,' I said, 'but do you think that there is any harm in dancing?'

"He laughed on my putting this question; it was a laugh of embarrassment; and he said, 'O, I don't pretend to be a judge of these things.'

"'Then,' said I, 'you don't intend to dance yourself to-night?'

"He smiled again, and said something about awkwardness, and blunders, and danger to his partner's shins.

"Here a general stir among the company put a period to our discourse, and all the party crowded out upon the lawn; during which scene of bustle and confusion I lost sight both of Lucy and Henry, but, as being the greatest stranger, I was taken under the wing of Mrs. Stephens herself, who informed me that the young people were going to form sets for cotillons, adding, that, as it was certain that a young lady of my elegant appearance and fine carriage must be able to dance cotillons, she hoped that I would permit her to introduce a partner to me.

"I now found myself somewhat in a strait, being, on the one hand, strongly urged by the desire of displaying my fine figure in the dance, and on the other, fearing that I should make a flaw in my new character, if I did not shew a proper contempt for the vain amusement of dancing. In the mean time, however, it was necessary for me to decide on what I would do, for the critical moment was at hand in which Mrs. Stephens threatened to go in search of a partner. One idea at length fixed my wavering inclination; it was this—that if I should be tempted

to dance, Henry Selwyn would then be left alone to enjoy himself in the company of his favourite Lucy, and this was a thought that I could not bear. I therefore determined to decline dancing; while, at the same time, instead of alleging the simple truth, that my grandmother perhaps would not like it, I pleaded, that my health was in so debilitated a state, as I was the native of a hot climate, that I never could support the fatigue of dancing.

"'What a pity, my dear,' returned Mrs. Stephens, in a voice properly tuned to the key of condolence, 'that you should be deprived, by the delicacy of your constitution, of this charming amusement.' So saying, and repeating her lamentations, she led me to a chair on the lawn, and then hastened to bestow another mite of her notice on some others of her guests; endeavouring, by thus dividing her attentions as minutely as possible, to make up, as much as lay in her power, for the cold and supercilious contempt of her daughters, who were far too deeply engaged about their own concerns to think of any body else.

"I had scarcely been a moment seated, before Henry and Lucy joined me, and we sat for a while, quietly observing the scene, which was not a little amusing, as within the contracted sphere of observation before us there might be discovered almost every variety of human passion and worldly caprice. I was, however, so imperfectly acquainted with the opinions of my companions in reference to amusements of the kind which we were witnessing, or of their modes of thinking respecting fashionable and gay life, and fashionable and gay people, that I hardly dared to hazard an observation, till Lucy at length spoke, and remarked how beautiful and happy every thing and every person looked.

"'Happy!' said Henry, 'and beautiful too! Those are strong expressions, Lucy, and might do very well if you were standing before a mirror.'

"She either did not hear or did not understand his last words, or she was perfectly unconcerned about what he thought of her, which I could not fully believe. But, be this as it may, no change was visible in her countenance; and I, who had both heard and understood what he said, remarked, with some little ill-humour, that I

wondered that she, who pretended to so much religion, could think that those persons were happy who were doing what was so improper.

"She looked at me with one of those innocent and mild expressions of countenance by which she was so highly distinguished above others, but she made me no answer: on which, Henry said to me, 'It is scarcely a minute ago, Miss Caroline, that you asked me if I thought that there could be any harm in dancing, and now you wonder that Lucy can even think tolerably of any one who joins in a dance. May I be favoured, my dear young lady,' he added, looking me earnestly in the face, 'with your real sentiments upon this subject?'

"'My sentiments!' I repeated: 'can they be questioned? Should I be sitting here, if I really approved of dancing?'

"'O,' said Henry, 'I thought that you came here because nobody asked you to dance.'

"Henry Selwyn was not nineteen, and he had sometimes a little of that unguarded and boyish manner which led him to say very blunt things, but he was generally sorry for them afterwards; and I well knew how to make him so, by bringing tears into my eyes, and assuming an air of uneasiness. As this was one of the occasions which I thought proper to work up into such a scene, I turned my face away, heaved a sigh, and looked as pathetically as circumstances would allow.

"'There, now,' said he, 'I have affronted you, Miss Caroline. I am truly sorry for it: I beg your pardon. Pray excuse me; I did not intend to be so rude: and I am the more to blame, because I thought that you wished to dance, and really had no partner. I ought to have asked you myself.'

"'Not if you considered dancing to be an improper amusement, Mr. Selwyn,' I said.

"'I have no settled opinion on the subject,' he answered. 'I know, indeed, that Mrs. Thornton is not fond of promoting dancing among young people; on this account she would not have us taught: but there is a great difference between a thing which is not desirable, and one that is decidedly wicked.'

"'Mr. Selwyn,' I rejoined, 'I certainly did understand, from what you hinted in the drawing-room, that

my grandmother does not deem dancing to be consistent with the character of a serious Christian; and I certainly did believe that you thought better of me than to suppose that I would willingly do any thing that was in the least degree displeasing to my excellent parent. You ought not, therefore, to have reproached me.'

"While I uttered these words, I remember that I picked a rose to pieces; and then, throwing the stalk away in a kind of petulant humour, I exclaimed, "O that I had not been born so near the sun! that I possessed less of that hasty and incautious warmth of feeling and impatience which will, I foresee, ever be raising up enemies against me!' I then muttered some incoherent expressions about not being justly appreciated, and little understood, &c. &c. and in this manner I went on till I had worked up the feelings of my young companion so much, that he quite turned his back upon Lucy, and set himself in good earnest to console me, and restore, if possible, my peace of mind.

"I had now obtained what I desired, which was to see my fair little cousin left wholly in the back-ground; and my spirits, in consequence, presently became so elevated, that, had any acute and experienced observer been present, it would have been no difficult matter for such a one to have read more of my mind than was desirable. In proportion to the degree to which my spirits rose, I grew talkative, and began to amuse myself and Henry with comments on the dancers: for which comments he shewed so much relish, that I was gradually led on to say many things which would have been much better omitted.

"I cannot tell how long we had been amusing ourselves in this manner, when Lucy, who had remained for some time quite still, suddenly turned round, and whispered one or two words in the ear of Henry; the consequence of which was such a violent rush of blood into his cheeks, and such an instant change of manner, that my self-love was strongly excited, and I gave Lucy a look which, had my eyes possessed the power of inflicting wounds, would not have left her uninjured. But my angry glances were entirely lost upon her, though not so on Henry; for, having spoken her mind to her adopted brother, she became again engaged with other matters,

and was looking about her with her usual expression of animation and composure.

"'You wish to know, perhaps, what Lucy whispered to me just now?' said Henry. 'They were only a few words, but I thank my sweet sister for them: by her remark she gave me a new proof of her pure affection, her truly sisterly love. Her words suggested the hint that it would be better for me to join the dancers than to indulge myself in unkind reflections upon them.'

"'Lucy,' I said, 'it is I who ought to thank you for this caution; and I should have done so, had you treated me with the same sincerity as that which you used with Mr. Selwyn.'

"'I should, my dear Caroline,' she answered, 'had you made the same remarks as Henry did.'

"'Well, I did then,' I answered, half laughing, 'and, indeed, much worse; but you let me alone: for you have not the same interest in me which you have in Henry.'

"'I am sorry that you should think so,' returned the little girl, with her usual tranquillity.

"I became irritated, and, therefore, broke out into some intemperate expressions, calling Lucy a strange little thing, and telling her that I did not fully understand her, but that I could not help believing that she was not quite so simple as she pretended to be.

"It seems that the little girl had never been accused of hypocrisy before, for she seemed to take my insinuation much to heart. Her delicate cheeks and neck became flushed with that fine and beautiful glow which is visible only in the most lovely complexions, her gentle eyes filled with tears; and we certainly should have had such a scene as I should not altogether have relished, and for which I perhaps should not have been able to find a very reputable apology, if Henry Selwyn had not suddenly taken her hand, and led her away towards another part of the garden, leaving me ready to bite my lips with vexation, and otherwise in no very agreeable situation, as I was sitting alone in a very conspicuous seat, within the view of a set of people to whom I was almost an entire stranger.

"The breaking up of the dancing-parties, however, soon afforded me some relief. Every one took seats as they could be found or provided; and as the elegant

Miss Harriet condescended to place herself by me, and brought with her several of her gay companions, I presently felt myself, as I thought, in the very centre of attraction of the Beau Monde, and I had quite forgotten my late mortification, till I found myself seated at an elegant supper-table, where, at some little distance on the opposite side, I saw Lucy sitting by Henry Selwyn, no traces of her late short-lived affliction being left on the features of the little girl, excepting such as added a softer and sweeter expression to her dovelike countenance.

"When I returned home, no hint was dropped, either by Henry or Lucy, reminding me of my unkind behaviour to my young cousin. But I was mortified to find that from that period I seemed rather to have gone back than to have advanced in the good graces of Henry Selwyn, at least, he appeared careful to avoid being alone with me; and Lucy, though she continued entirely unaltered in her manner, yet seemed to feel that I was as little congenial to her as she had seemed to be with me.

"Thus, much in the manner I have described, passed away the remainder of my first summer in England. In the autumn Henry Selwyn was entered at the University, he being intended for the ministry. On the day of his departure, I was secretly much vexed; but Lucy wept till her eyes were swelled, and she appeared to be really unwell, though she uttered not a single complaint. My self-love, however, was much hurt by the different manner in which Henry took his leave of me and of Lucy; for I did not consider that he was to Lucy as a dear brother, having been brought up in the house with her from her early infancy, while to me as yet he was little more than a common acquaintance.

"In this manner, however, is the fallen creature, man, blinded by selfishness, in this manner are reason and common sense confounded, and the greater part of our race is thus induced to demand such tributes of exclusive attention, respect, and love, as in the very nature of things few only could possibly receive, and as, if justice were done to all, no individual ought to have. But who can tell what evils to mankind, nay, to the universe itself, have originated from this self-appropriating spirit? Hence proceeded the ruin of angels, and, through them,

the fall of man. Hence have sprung all those destructions of cities, those ruins of provinces, those bloody fields of battle, with the descriptions of which every page of history, from the beginning of time to the present day, is polluted. We look back with horror on the murderous characters of those ancient princes who possessed no splendid qualities to eclipse the darker shades of their characters: but we do not consider, that whenever we desire aught of the good things of this world beyond what are bestowed upon us by the free gift of the Almighty, although we may not yet have used any sinful efforts of our own to obtain them, we nevertheless number ourselves with the Antiochi, the Ptolemies, the Cæsars, and the Pompeys of ancient days; and we may trace in our own hearts not only the seeds of all their abominations, but also the buds and blossoms of all that they ever committed.

"When man ceases to receive his earthly benefits from the hand of his heavenly Father in the same dependent and thankful spirit with which the infant derives its nourishment from its mother's breast, he then begins that war with God, and enters upon that course of open rebellion, which, if carried to its utmost extent, would end in his separating himself entirely from his almighty Parent, and his uniting himself with Satan in that everlasting and awful enmity against his Maker which we are taught to believe will continue as an example of divine displeasure throughout the endless duration of eternity.

"In order to ascertain, and thus truly judge of, the real qualities of our feelings, we ought to endeavour in idea to follow them on to their probable ultimate effects. It may, in the cases of some of us, please God to check us in our mad career, it may please him, by the dispensations of his providence, to smother in embryo many of our evil designs. We may not perhaps be among that unhappy number of persons to whom a temporary success is given to all their projects; yet there is no selfish or ambitious feeling in our bosoms, however it may be concealed from others, which will not lead the person who indulges it to everlasting death, unless it be torn from the heart as a right hand or a right eye from the body.—But to return to my story.

"When Henry took his leave, I was so agitated by

jealousy, that I could not bear to see the tender manner in which he soothed and consoled his weeping cousin. I could not endure to hear him say, 'I shall not be far off, Lucy; I will come again; and you shall write to me, and I will answer you: and at Christmas you shall see me again, and then we will renew our pleasant walks and our drawing-lessons. Sweet Lucy, do not weep: wipe those gentle eyes; do not weep for me; I will come again.' In this manner he consoled her, and he looked back at her, as she stood in the window, till his horse had carried him quite out of sight.

"After the departure of Henry Selwyn, the house appeared to me to lose much of its cheerfulness. Winter was fast approaching, and this was the first indication that I had ever met with of this season in England. I had never seen in the West Indies such a complete fall of the leaf as I then witnessed; I had never seen the woods entirely bare, or the sear foliage driven about by the winter whirlwind; I had never been used to be serenaded by the hollow whistling of the freezing blast; nor had I ever before led so retired a life as that which I then spent. In short, I felt exceedingly oppressed by melancholy; and the consequence was, that, instead of having recourse to useful and active employments for consolation, instead of laying myself out for the benefit of my fellow-creatures, I endeavoured to amuse myself with my own thoughts: and, for this purpose, I sought to be much alone, which it was by no means difficult for me to bring to pass; as, very shortly after the departure of Henry, my grandmother was confined to her bed by a rheumatic complaint, and Lucy, therefore, almost continually attended her.

"And now, (as it was expressly in order to lay open to my young readers some of the dark windings of the human heart, and thus to hold a mirror to them which may afford them some little assistance in the arduous task of self-examination, that I attempted to write my history,) I shall endeavour to give some little account of the strange and contradictory feelings which at that time took possession of my mind.

"My strongest and most prevailing sentiment was then, as it had been at all other times, the love of self, and the constant employment of my thoughts was engaged about self, and in considering by what way and

how I could best promote my own happiness in the present circumstances amidst which I was placed. I had become convinced of my errors during the summer: but how far this conviction was more than the mere dictates of reason I dare not say. That religion was a matter of some consequence, that the everlasting welfare of the soul depended upon it, that I had done wrong throughout the former part of my life in living in such carelessness respecting it, and that it behoved me in future to pay such attention to divine things as might ensure my everlasting happiness; so far, I think, my convictions went; and, by degrees, my mind was a little further opened, and I began to form some faint idea of the depravity of my heart: but that idea was faint indeed, and perhaps amounted to no more than might be produced by mere human reason and reflection. My feelings, however, with respect to religion, let them have been what they might, whether derived from man or God, were sufficient to lead me to the observance of certain forms, and rendered my conduct more serious in family and public worship.

"In the mean time, the corruptions of my heart remained wholly unchanged, the idol self reigned within with undiminished sway; and nothing whatever either pleased or affected, elated or depressed me, but as it referred to self. It seemed, at that period, that I had no power to forget self even for a moment; and the only promising sign which I can remember as then existing with respect to me, was, that I was conscious of this devotedness to self, and I sometimes wished that it were otherwise with me. Such, however, was the prevalence of this feeling, that I could neither speak nor move in the presence even of a servant, without thinking of my appearance. I was always fancying that I should make a fit subject for a beautiful or an interesting picture on such and such occasions; and, with a view to these my imaginary pictures, I often, in the presence of the physician, either knelt at my grandmother's feet, gently rubbing them with my hand, or hung over her pillow when the rector of the parish came to converse with her, or stood at the parlour-window extending my hand to some poor beggar when persons were passing the gate; or observed various other little acts of eye-service, which

I need not describe, as one or two instances may suffice for suggesting the ideas of a thousand more.

"In the mean time, I could not help envying Lucy, because I could not detect in her any symptoms whatever of this desire of display: on the contrary, every thing commendable that she did appeared to flow freely from the heart. No one even imagined, till a long time afterwards, how much this little girl did for the relief of her infirm grandmother; how frequently, when she heard her venerable parent stir, she rose out of her little bed in the night, and stood by her side, anticipating all her wants, and soothing all her pains; and I have not unfrequently seen the tear tremble in her eye when the servants have offered to relieve her from the office of taking up her grandmother's meals.

"Sometimes, when I witnessed all this, I tried to think that she waited on her grandmother in this way in order to obtain from her a greater legacy at her death; but I could not long entertain so coarse an idea. Was not Lucy as obliging to the poorest creature in the village who stood in need of her assistance? How was I to solve this problem? I could not understand it; I could not then comprehend that glorious process by which the nature of man is entirely changed, by which he is emptied of self, by which the Almighty is restored to his throne in the heart, while holy love to God and to one's neighbour becomes the fulfilment of every law.

"After having thus spent three months as gloomy as any that I had ever known, my grandmother recovered so far as to appear again below stairs, Lucy returned to her former occupations, and, to crown all, Henry Selwyn returned from the University.

"We enjoyed a very pleasant Christmas: there was a great deal of hospitality, and such hospitality as is recommended by our Saviour. My grandmother also found much work for us in preparing garments for the poor; an employment in which I should not formerly have found much pleasure: but Henry Selwyn was present to read to us while we were at work, and, after the tedious monotony of the last three months, every change was delightful.

"I was still, however, uneasy at the friendship subsisting between Henry and Lucy, which seemed to have

grown stronger from their short separation, and to possess all the sweetest characters of brotherly and sisterly attachment.

"Thus passed the Christmas, and Mr. Selwyn returned to college: in the spring vacation he, however, came again, and then my grandmother, being in tolerably good health, and, as usual, in a very sweet state of mind, I witnessed a short renewal of that peculiar kind of happiness which struck me so much on my first arrival in England.

"There is something in the bursting forth of spring so congenial with the finest feelings of man, so abundant in the production of hope and innocent delight, that its appearance seldom fails of reviving the spirits even of those persons who have been in the habit of witnessing it year after year from early infancy. But I had never before known the charms of an English April; I had never before inhaled the mild fragrance of the wild violet and pale primrose; and I was certainly much touched with this new world of budding beauties which surrounded me—touched, I repeat, and almost led to forget myself on the occasion, when, unfortunately, I met with a volume of Thomson's Seasons; where finding some of his beautiful descriptions of spring, I took credit to myself for the discovery, and, from that period, I could not speak upon the subject of the vernal beauties without being haunted with conceits of my own good taste and superior discernment, by which I no doubt rendered myself as ridiculous as needs be in the estimation of those who had any insight into character.—But to proceed with my story.

"I have still, selfish and unfeeling as I then was, some tender remembrances of the last day on which Henry Selwyn was with us at that period. It was one of those charming days in which all the perfumes of the spring were diffused throughout the air, and in which new life seemed to be given to all nature. My grandmother, who had not been out of doors for many months, proposed an airing in her garden-chair, and we all prepared to attend her. The relief of some poor person was, as usual, to be the object of our expedition; and we spent one whole morning in our ramble, exploring scenes which, for their freshness and beauty, I thought

I had never seen equalled. Henry on this occasion was gay beyond all that I had ever before witnessed in him. He must needs dress Lucy's bonnet with primroses, and he indulged himself in that kind of playful raillery which we sometimes see in young people, and which, when under proper restraints, is neither unpleasing nor blameable. His feelings, however, were very tender; for, on my grandmother exhibiting some symptoms of weakness in endeavouring to get out of her carriage at the door of a cottage, he betrayed considerable agitation, though he said nothing.

"The day following Henry Selwyn left us, but, though he was absent, I still continued to think much of him, neither did I make it a matter of principle, as I ought on many accounts to have done, not to indulge myself in these thoughts; for the very excellencies of this young man, which were obvious to every beholder, ought to have put me on my guard, had I possessed even common prudence: his regard also for Lucy ought to have been a check to me, even had my self-love alone influenced my conduct. But what are all considerations of mere worldly prudence, when they are assaulted by the force of passion?

"It was not long after the departure of Henry that my grandmother was again taken ill. I did not understand at that time the nature of her disorder, but I now know that it was a paralytic stroke, for she never afterwards appeared to be altogether herself.

"At this time, we had a visit from my cousin Selina, (the eldest daughter of my uncle Ormond,) who was the elder sister of Lucy. My grandmother, before her illness, had expressed a wish to see Selina; and an invitation had, therefore, been sent to the young lady, who arrived at the time I speak of, her father, Mr. Ormond, having just before received a call from the Continent either on business or pleasure, it little matters which.

"I had expected to see in Selina a second Lucy, and a second rival; and accordingly, when she stepped out of the carriage, and ran into the arms of her sister, I looked impatiently till she should turn her face towards me. My quick eye in a moment discerned the same soft complexion, fine hair, and lovely figure, which had so often disturbed me in Lucy; and when, at length, she

came forwards to salute me, I beheld, with inexpressible sorrow, a set of features equally charming, and I could not help internally lamenting my misfortunes in having two such pretty cousins. 'In some families,' I said to myself, 'there are twenty, thirty, nay, forty grandchildren, and not a beauty among them; and I—unhappy I—have only two cousins, and they are both charming!'

"Well, but notwithstanding this severe calamity, it was needful for me to seem cheerful, nay, happy, on the occasion of my meeting with my cousin; and I accordingly took one of her hands, while Lucy held the other, and led her into the parlour.

"Her first question was to ask for our grandmother; when, being told of her situation, and that she could not leave her room, she shrugged up her shoulders, and exclaimed, 'What, in bed? does she keep her bed? Only think of that!'

"Lucy and I both looked at her, but neither of us made any reply: on which, she began to give an account of her journey; and I presently found out, that in one respect at least she was like myself, for she had a pretty strong persuasion that she could not pass any where without drawing all eyes upon her. Though she had travelled down into Berkshire in her father's carriage, driven by an old coachman who had lived in the family ever since she was born, yet, in her own estimation, she had encountered more perils by the way than have fallen to the lot of many a one who has made the tour of Christendom. At the inn where she had got out to breakfast, it is hard to say what she had suffered, what inconveniences she had endured, what alarms she had encountered, what emotions her appearance had excited. 'Really, cousin Caroline,' she said, 'if I had had to travel into Northumberland instead of Berkshire, I would have renounced all food rather than have exposed myself to such annoyances.'

"I know not what reply I made to all this; but Lucy's remark on the occasion I shall never forget. 'I cannot understand, dear sister,' she said, 'what you are talking about. Were the people rude to you at the inn? What did they say to you? Surely they would not say any thing impertinent?'

"'Say any thing impertinent!' repeated Selina, laugh-

ing; 'O, Lucy, Lucy! you are Lucy still, I see. Cousin Caroline, have you not found out that my little sister is the prettiest little fool in the world? I will answer for her, that if you could but persuade her that grandmamma thought it right, she would trundle an orange-barrow through every street in London, crying fresh oranges, without feeling the slightest uneasiness on the occasion.'

"Lucy still made no answer; and I replied, 'There is nothing in the world that I covet so much as Lucy's composure. I would give all that I have on earth for her self-control. It is such a comfort, such an advantage, to be always cool and easy, like Lucy.'

"'Cool and easy!' replied Selina, laughing: 'a pretty description of a young lady!'

"'O, I meant no harm,' I replied; 'none in the least: I was not thinking of what I said.'

"Another laugh ensued; after which, I found myself quite at home with my new cousin, and felt perfectly easy in her presence, my envious feelings with respect to her being considerably allayed, though I could still discern that she had very pretty features.

"During our extraordinary mirth, it may be asked what Lucy was doing. In reply to which, I must tell you, that this lovely young creature had, as usual, some work which she was desirous of finishing with all speed for the use of some poor person. This work had been laid aside at the moment of her sister's arrival, but had been resumed as soon as our conversation took the inexplicable turn above mentioned; and Lucy availed herself of the first pause in our conversation, to remind Selina of some old woman in the neighbourhood, whom she had formerly known, and to say that she was making a gown for her against Easter-Sunday: on saying which, she held up her cumbrous job, and exhibited a common chintz, of a very large pattern, and cut out after the most obsolete fashion.

"Here was matter for new merriment on the part of the town-bred sister, who remarked, that she was sure that Lucy would have no objection to take a job of this kind into one of the most elegant drawing-rooms in town.

"Thus have I described my first interview with my

cousin Selina; of whom I readily formed this opinion, that she was what she called her sister—a pretty fool. I never, indeed, had reason to suppose her particularly wise in any sense of the word; but she wanted not art, and she was exceedingly shrewd in the promotion of her own interests, that is, as far as she understood them. She was also, like myself, and like every other unconverted person on the face of the earth, a heroine in her own opinion, and desirous of being deemed so by others.

"It may perhaps be asked what I mean by this assertion, that all unregenerate persons, and too many others, of whom we might expect better things, are heroes and heroines, according to their own conceits, and that all naturally desire to be thought such by others.

"My answer is, that both a hero and a heroine is a person who is distinguished above the general mass of mankind by some peculiar and remarkable quality, by which the person so distinguished is rendered worthy of particular honour, love, or approbation, and thus becomes especially liable to the persecutions of envious and designing characters.

"According to the very nature of things, few persons can be heroes. But many may desire to be such: and I venture to maintain, that all unregenerate persons desire this, and that all vain persons believe that they have in some degree obtained this their object, and, however low, mean, and despicable they may be, that they are, in the eyes of some one or other, objects of admiration and envy.

"It has, during many years, been the custom for religious persons to cry down the writings of modern novelists; and often, indeed, with good reason, because these works have commonly a decided tendency to encourage and foster this selfish principle of the desire of distinction. All the principal, and even all the best, female characters in the old novels, are represented as heroines not only in fact, but also in their own opinions; and, consequently, these writings in general present a false view of life and character, by setting up individuals as particular objects of admiration and persecution, and thus inducing young people to believe that there are in society certain persons on whom the eyes of others are fixed with wonder and amazement, an idea which is ge-

nerally incorrect: for the benefits and advantages of life are more equally and impartially distributed than the young are aware of, as an attentive observer will soon perceive; one person possessing one advantage, and another another; and a brilliant talent being often overbalanced by some conspicuous defect.—But to return to novels.

"I do not dispute that their effects are not generally bad; but, at the same time, I wish to point out, that the same inflammatory consequences frequently spring from other sources as well as from novels and plays. There are many heroines in the world besides those who are persecuted for their beauty, and none who are in a more dangerous state than those who have made religion their stepping-stone to conceits of this kind. There are always to be met with a certain set of weak, though good people, who delight in puffing up religious persons with such ideas—in leading the evangelic preacher, who enjoys a great benefice in England, to suppose that he is an example of heroic fortitude in enduring the scoffs and taunts of a few low-bred infidels; in inducing the young professor to imagine that he is enduring such spiritual conflicts as none ever before experienced, and in leading such persons to talk and write continually about themselves, under the pretence of discoursing of religion; and, in fine, in using the profession of religion (the true tendency of which, in reality, is only to humble) to inflate and excite the pride of the heart to the most dreadful extent.—But to return to my history.

"I soon found that Selina was as fully alive to her own interests as myself, that she was, in fact, a heroine in her own opinion, but one of the most common sort, a mere novel-reading heroine; while my selfishness lay considerably deeper, and was not ashamed to assume the garb of religion. Nevertheless I was much amused by Selina, as long as her interests did not interfere with mine. I was pleased to hear her ridicule Lucy; and, as I found that she made no effort to conceal her foibles from our grandmother, I did not fear so much from her in that quarter as I did from Lucy.

"Selina continued with us some time; and we were expecting the return of Henry Selwyn very soon, when my grandmother, who had appeared to be getting better,

had a second stroke; and, about the same time, we received information, that, by the sudden death of a distant relation of Henry Selwyn, a considerable property had devolved to him which had not been expected.

"Soon after this information had been communicated to us, the following dialogue took place between Selina and me.

"'Who is this Henry Selwyn?' said I to Selina: 'and how comes he to have been brought up by our grandmother?'

"She informed me that he was the son of a very old friend of the family, and had been left to the guardianship of our grandmother on the death of his parents. 'And now, Caroline,' she added, 'I have given you an account of his pedigree, it is your part to describe his person; for, strange to say, I never saw him.'

"I shall not repeat the description that I gave of him, but shall merely say that I concluded my description with these words: 'It does not matter, I conceive, Selina, what you and I may think of him; for your little silly sister has as completely secured her interest in his favour, as I doubt not she will do in that of our grandmother.'

"This was said in a confidential tone: in reply to which, Selina answered, in the same manner, 'Why, you simpleton, don't you know that my grandmother has nothing in her power, unless it may be her gold repeater and the silver spoons, and I am sure Lucy is welcome to them, as far as I am concerned; for she deserves something for the trouble that she takes. At grandpapa's death,' she added, with a childish lisp which she often affected, 'at grandpapa's death, the property was settled between his two daughters; and you, Caroline, as the representative of one, will have one half, and I and Lucy the other, as the representatives of the other. Grandmother can't help it, or I am sure I should not have sat so easy, and let Lucy wait upon her and wheedle her as she does. And I think, that if you did not know before what I have now told you, you are a greater goose than I took you for, to give Lucy so many opportunities as you have done.'

"'But,' said I, 'I suppose that Lucy knows the state of affairs.'

"'I really can't tell,' returned Selina, shrugging up

her shoulders; 'I never enter into conversation with her. I never could. She and I have not half an idea in common: and if I do but hint to her a word about grandmamma's death, she begins to cry and sob, as you said she did at Mrs. Stephens's rout; and we have no Henry Selwyn here to take her aside and give her sugar-plums.'

"The entrance of Lucy put an end to our discourse: but I have reason to think that some things which then passed in our minds were not very soon effaced from them.

"The time, as I before said, was now coming when Henry was to arrive; a circumstance which was equally desired, I imagine, by Lucy, myself, and Selina. Just at this crisis, the fashionable and admired Miss Harriet Stephens began to cultivate my acquaintance, and that of Selina; a circumstance which rather puzzled me at the time, but which I afterwards found it no difficult matter to account for. I began, also, at this juncture, rather to wish to free myself from the close intimacy which Selina had formed with me. 'Henry,' I thought, 'will judge of me by my intimacy with this girl; and he will form a contemptible opinion of me from this circumstance.' I therefore endeavoured to encourage her intercourse with Harriet Stephens; and, as these ladies seemed to possess very similar tastes, I soon had the satisfaction of finding myself more at leisure to pursue my own caprices.

"It had been only a very few weeks since Henry had left us: yet, when, at the appointed time, which was the beginning of the long vacation, he rode up to the door, and sprang from his horse, I thought that I never before saw him look so well. Whether he were really improved, or whether the few thousands that he had lately received had added fresh graces to his appearance, I know not; but certainly I blushed when he came up to address me; and I looked anxiously to see how he would receive Selina, whom I introduced to him as the sister of Lucy.

"During this short moment, I had time enough to wish that he might not be pleased with her. But I had not much leisure to dwell either on my hopes or fears; for, after having made a slight bow, he eagerly enquired

after Mrs. Thornton and Lucy, adding, that he hoped the former was not so ill as report said.

"I now recollected that it was needful for me to look serious: and I answered in as pathetic a tone as I could. 'And Lucy,' he said, 'where is Lucy? where shall I find her?'

"And he was going out to seek her, when she ran in, and flew towards him, and seemed almost on the point of throwing her arms round his neck, when, suddenly checking herself, she burst into tears, and said, 'O Henry, Henry! thank God you are come again!'

"Never shall I forget—I, who was such an admirer of picturesque arrangement, particularly when I thought that my own dear self presented the most prominent and interesting figure in the groups—how very lovely this youthful pair appeared, as they sat together on a sofa, her innocent face being bathed with tears, and he endeavouring to console her with all the tenderness of pure affection, the strength of reason, and the ardour of true piety. 'Grieve not, my Lucy,' he said, 'for our dear parent, as for one without hope. She will ever live in our memory; and we will, with the divine blessing, modify our lives to her pleasure. She, who made our childhood so peculiarly happy, shall regulate our future measures. In all that we do, we will consult her taste, even though she may be dead. Our house, our furniture, our garden, our trees, and our habitual conduct, shall be arranged and adjusted so as we think she would have wished them to be, had she lived to see them.'

"More he added, but it was in a low tone, and perhaps not meant for our ears. But I had heard enough, and so had Selina. We looked at each other with amazement. 'Our house, our garden, our future life,'—'This language is plain indeed,' I thought, 'and Lucy receives it not as if it were new and strange to her.'

"I was truly mortified to think that things were gone so far; and I was at the same time shocked at the wish which now more powerfully than ever influenced my mind, of stepping in between this happy and lovely pair, and becoming myself the object of the same pure and ardent affection as Henry professed for Lucy. And thus I argued with myself, and endeavoured to silence the voice of conscience.—'Lucy's affection for Henry is

but that of a sister for a brother; it is such a regard as might well subsist, even after he had married another. Should he marry me, she shall have a home under our roof; she shall never want a friend. I will be a sister to her; I will guard her inexperience, and protect her simplicity.'

"In the course of a few minutes, these and many more thoughts of the same kind passed rapidly through my mind; and I should have indulged in them probably much longer, had I not seen the eyes of Selina fixed upon me with a more enquiring and penetrating look than I at one time thought her capable of.

"It is no difficult matter for two selfish persons to read each other's thoughts. Whether wise or foolish, they seem to possess a kind of instinct by which they find each other out: and I am sensible, that, at the moment of which I speak, Selina and I became mutually acquainted with some things in each other's minds, which we would gladly have concealed. She, however, had either less feeling, or had been more inured to the arts of the world, than myself; therefore, when it was signified that Mrs. Thornton wished to see Henry, and he had left the room accompanied by Lucy, she instantly began to make her comments on what had just before passed between her sister and the young gentleman; she made also several remarks in favour of his appearance, and said, that she thought we should both be great fools if we allowed that little girl to carry off such a prize.

"Never was amazement greater than mine on hearing these words: and I could only say, 'O Selina! you astonish me.'

"In reply, she burst into a loud laugh, saying, 'Why, I think that there is no nonsense which a human being could utter, which you would not believe. Though you pretend to so much cleverness, I do not consider you to be one bit wiser than Lucy herself.'

"So saying, she changed the subject, and began to talk about the fashions in a new magazine, leaving me more in doubt as to her real sentiments than I had been a minute before.

"When Henry Selwyn returned into the parlour, he looked particularly serious. It was tea-time, and the tea-equipage was on the table. He sat on a sofa near

me, and opposite Selina. He looked round him, sighed once or twice, and then, trying to rouse himself, 'I am sorry,' he said, 'to see Mrs. Thornton so much changed. It is painful to me, when I come home, not to find her in her usual place,'—directing his eye, as he spoke, towards her chair, which was now occupied by Selina.

"'Well said, indeed!' cried Selina, laughing as she spoke. 'Mr. Selwyn certainly does understand the art of complimenting in its last and utmost perfection. Only think, my dear Caroline, think of a young gentleman looking at a lady's chair, and regretting that it is not filled by her grandmother instead of herself.'

"There are some speeches which appear to be so thoroughly ill-timed and ill-placed, and which are in themselves so particularly ridiculous, that they fail not to throw the most determined gravity off its balance. Such was the remark which I have recited; and its effect was to produce a laugh from every one present: but the laugh was painful to all but Selina; and to Henry especially so, for he immediately sunk into silence. On which, Selina, wholly unabashed, immediately introduced some other subject, and rattled away in a manner which appeared to be decidedly uncongenial with the feelings of the rest of the party. She, however, persevered, till Henry seemed drawn into something like attention, and so far roused, that he began to make enquiries respecting his old neighbours, and, together with others, he mentioned the Stephenses.

"Here was a new subject furnished for the volubility of Selina, who entertained us for more than half an hour with anecdotes about her dear Harriet Stephens; and would probably have given us another half hour's nonsense of the same kind, if she had not just then remembered that she had an appointment with this young lady, and, in consequence, she took her leave for the present.

"Being thus left alone with Henry, and finding that Lucy still continued with our grandmother; for the old lady, as her intellect became more feeble, expressed increasing affection for her dear child; I waited for a moment, till he should speak, and give me some intimation of his feelings with respect to the late discourse. 'O, Miss Caroline,' he said, as he shut the door after Selina, 'and that is Lucy's sister? O, how unlike!

Well, but she is gone for a short time—I wish it were a longer. And now,' he said, 'that we have a little breathing-time, pray tell me, when was my dear old friend taken ill? and how does our Lucy bear it? Pray let me have some rational account of these things from you.'

"While he was speaking, self again began to set me at work to calculate. I found that I gained as much by the forwardness of Selina, in the comparison, as I lost by the unaffected modesty of Lucy. Henry, I perceived, had conceived a dislike to Selina; and, in consequence, was favourably disposed towards me as the better of the two. 'And he thus regards me,' I thought, 'because he deems me more serious and more sympathizing. It is necessary, therefore, for me to cherish in him this his good opinion of me.'

"All this passed in a moment through my mind; and I, therefore, lost no time in giving such answers to his enquiries, as I trusted would produce on his mind the best possible impression of my sensibility. You may perhaps ask me whether I was sensible, at the moment, of my acting an hypocritical part. I answer, that I certainly must have been: for I knew that my grandmother's illness disturbed me very little; that I had been very easy respecting either her life or death ever since I knew that I was to be a gainer by the latter; and that I never troubled myself so far as to make a single enquiry about Lucy's health, or the state of her spirits. How then can it be supposed that I was not conscious of my duplicity, when I pretended to sympathize so sincerely in Henry's feelings respecting my grandmother and Lucy?

"Henry and I sat conversing for some time. At length, when it became dusk, he expressed a wish that Lucy would come down again: but Lucy not appearing, he asked me to walk with him on the gravel before the house.

"It would have been very easy for me to have said, 'Lucy seldom appears below but at meals,' and to have offered to take her place, and send her down to him. But I made no such remark, nor any such offer; on the contrary, I accompanied him out of doors, and drew him on to converse, by speaking of the excellencies of my

grandmother, and of other subjects which I knew would be agreeable to him.

"At supper, we met again. Lucy and Selina were present. Selina had much to tell us about her walk. Lucy looked fatigued and pale, and was unable to enter into conversation; and Henry Selwyn seemed oppressed by many painful feelings.

"The next morning, we all met again at breakfast; after which, Lucy was leaving the room as usual, when Henry, taking her hand as she passed by his chair, said, 'And are you going to absent yourself all day? Cannot we walk together, or draw together, or read together, as we used to do? Cannot you spare me a little time?'

"She stood still behind his chair, and looked sorrowfully down upon him, while the tears stood in her eyes. 'Oh, Henry!' she replied, 'it is not as it once was. Our dear grandmother cannot now go out with us; and I cannot leave her now. But perhaps she may get better; and then we shall be happy again.'

"She was nearly bursting into tears, but, making a violent effort, she restrained herself, and said, 'But Caroline and Selina will walk with you, and draw with you, and go with you to see the school, and the poor people. I am sure I can answer for them.'

"'They are very good,' replied he, coldly: 'but, Lucy, might I not come to see your grandmother?'

"'Sometimes,' she answered, sorrowfully: 'but my poor grandmother,'—and she hesitated; and then added, 'she cannot enjoy your company now.'

"'Well,' said he, with a sigh, 'if it must be so:' and, kissing her hand, he let her pass on out of the room.

"After she was gone, he sat for a few minutes silent; then, rising up, he lounged to the window, sat awhile in it, picking the jessamine to pieces, and then came back to the table, where I had settled myself to draw, though I believe that I had not previously touched a pencil since I had seen him last.

"Henry was remarkably fond of drawing; and, as I expected, the bait took. He presently began to busy himself with the pencils; and, after a short time, he was as fully engaged as I could wish in the work of instructing me.

"Thus we contrived to pass away this morning, and also several others. In the evening, we walked. Sometimes Lucy was of the party, but Harriet Stephens and Selina were with us much oftener.

"At first, when Lucy was not with us, he was restless and impatient, but insensibly he seemed to become more reconciled to her absence; and I was surprised sometimes to see how high his spirits would rise, when stimulated by the flippant pertness of Selina, and the sharper repartees of Harriet Stephens. That both these young ladies had a view to the thousands, more or less, of which he had lately become the possessor, I have little doubt; and that they had also no objection to the individual who possessed these thousands, and that we all three were alike influenced by the desire of eradicating the image of Lucy from his heart, I also am assured; and, in consequence, we played into each other's hands, to a certain degree, in order to bring this desirable end to pass: but if we agreed among each other, it was because each despised the others, and each believed that her own success would be ensured, if the little rival could but be set on one side.

"With these views, however, which I am persuaded we all cherished, there is no wonder that we united in one effort to amuse Henry; neither will it be a matter of astonishment, that this young man should have been a little drawn aside, when attacked by such united forces: nevertheless, though he was sometimes induced to forget himself, to forget his old habits of devotedness to Lucy, to forget the sufferings of his parental friend, yet, whenever he saw his Lucy again, the tide of his affections seemed to roll back into its former channel; and he not unfrequently caused me to renounce, on these occasions, all hopes of overcoming affection such as this.

"In the mean time, while Selina laughed and talked away, at random, and while Harriet Stephens endeavoured to carry all before her by a kind of dashing impudence, I was sensible that I was the only one of the three for whom Henry entertained the slightest respect. When he spoke on religious subjects, I alone could either answer him, or seem to understand him; and it was to me only that he ever appeared at all inclined to open his mind.

"During this time, Lucy calmly yet firmly pursued her duty by the bedside of her grandmother, who, growing more and more attached to her, and gradually becoming less and less under the influence of reason, as her intellects failed through the force of her disease, this little girl was induced to make efforts which presently shewed themselves in their baleful effects; as her eyes were becoming languid, her cheeks pale, and a kind of fixed sorrow was now settling itself on her face.

"The progress from glowing health to the extreme of languor was so gradual in the lovely Lucy, that it would have been impossible for the most accurate observer to ascertain the precise time of its commencement. It was first observed by Henry, (and he indeed was the first who remarked it to me,) one evening, when he had been walking with Harriet, Selina, and myself. We had been in very high spirits; there had been much laughing and talking; and this gaiety had continued on the part of some of us till we had actually come under my grandmother's bed-chamber-window, in which Lucy alone was visible, sitting reading by the last glow of the setting sun.

"As soon as she saw us, she came down, and, meeting us in the hall, she accosted us with one of those faint smiles with which persons often meet those to whom they wish to appear more cheerful than they really are. The faintness of her smile seemed to reproach us all with unpardonable levity; and Miss Harriet, in particular, asked how Mrs. Thornton did, expressing a hope that she was no worse.

"'No,' said Lucy, with a sigh, 'no worse, but very ill:' and she walked to the window, and leaned against the frame.

"Henry followed her to the window, and spoke to her. I know not exactly what he said, but I distinguished these words: 'Are you displeased, Lucy?'

"'No, Henry,' she answered. 'Why should I be displeased?' and she suddenly turned away, and went out of the room, and we saw her no more till the next morning, when she again appeared pale and depressed; and it seemed that her appearance had communicated her uneasiness to Henry.

"After breakfast, I was left alone with him; on which

occasion he drew his chair near to me, and questioned me closely about what had passed on the evening before. He remarked, that he thought Lucy was much altered, that he feared he had in some way offended her, that she was not open and cheerful with him, as formerly; in short, that something was wrong, and that he wished I would give him my opinion on the subject.

"In reply, I might have said, 'Lucy is indeed altered, because she is unhappy, fatigued, or unwell: she needs comfort and support from you, whereas you demand it from her.' Yet I made no such answer; but rather insinuated, that I thought her behaviour on the last night extraordinary, and that I feared that something had offended her, though I qualified this remark by saying that Lucy had in general the sweetest of dispositions, and who was there on earth that was perfect?

"Henry seemed more hurt by his own fancies and my insinuations than I expected, a circumstance which proved to me the strength and ardour of his regard, and I almost repented of what I had done: but my self-interest was engaged on my side, and I therefore allowed him to continue in the mistake into which he had fallen.

"Were I to point out one single proof of my selfishness more base and cruel than another, this is the one on which I perhaps might fix most unquestionably. But what self-deception often ensues, when we attempt to weigh one crime against another, or to say that one wilful sin is heavier than another?

"This action, however, which I have just described, was the first which inflicted upon my mind strong feelings of guilt. I do not remember my ever having been thoroughly out of humour with myself till this moment: my remorse, however, was not sufficient to induce me to undo what I had done; for in this contest my selfishness still prevailed, as, indeed, alas! it did, till my fate on earth was sealed, and every hope of peace in this world was for ever excluded.—But no more of this.

"Immediately after my conversation with Mr. Selwyn, he had walked out, and was met by Selina, either accidentally or intentionally. In a short time, they both returned together; and Selina remarked, in her seemingly careless manner, that she had observed that Mr. Selwyn was very much out of spirits, and that, also, as

Lucy had looked very sullen at breakfast, she doubted not that they had had a quarrel.

"Henry shook his head, and was silent.

"'Lucy is jealous of you, Henry,' said she: 'I know she thinks that you have neglected her, and that you like the company of others better than hers.'

"'Has she said so?' asked Mr. Selwyn.

"'No,' said Selina, 'she has not, indeed, said so much: for, to tell you the truth, she never mentions you at all; she has other objects in view at present.'

"'Other objects!' repeated Mr. Selwyn.

"'Yes,' replied the other, laughing; 'a view to a handsome legacy, over and above what grandpapa left us.'

"'Tis false!' said Henry, in a passion, and reddening to his very forehead. 'Lucy mercenary! my simple, lovely little Lucy forming plans to get money! What unaccountable suggestions!'

"A loud laugh, on the part of Selina, followed this exclamation of young Selwyn's; and she immediately remarked, as she once before had said to me, 'Why, Henry Selwyn, what a simpleton you must be, to suppose that I meant any thing more than a jest! If I had accused Lucy of loving a doll, and coveting a baby-house, I might have expected that you would give me some credit: but for me seriously to call that little simpleton a mercenary legacy-hunter, why, I might as well have compared her with Alexander the Great!'

"'I wish, however,' returned Henry, thoughtfully, 'that you had said nothing about it: the palate revolts at poison as well as the stomach.'

"'The palate,' repeated she, laughing, and tapping him on the back, 'is not the only part affected: I am afraid, that in your heat you swallowed a drop or two of the distasteful potion that I presented to you. But, somehow or other,' she added, 'you and Lucy have certainly fallen out; and I would advise you to make it up as soon as possible, lest Lucy should take a fancy to the smart young physician (mentioning his name) who is so attentive at my grandmother's bedside.'

"Here was a stroke of art which even I did not expect, and which seemed to come with such a stunning force, that neither Henry nor I could for some minutes

look up; during which critical interval Lucy came in, perhaps with some consciousness of having looked too serious at breakfast, and she now appeared to be desirous to remove all painful impressions by a cheerful expression of countenance.

"As I heard her gentle step, I looked up, and never, I think, saw her appear more lovely. The rich bloom of her cheeks had indeed faded to the softest blush, the blue veins of her temples were distinctly seen, and a languid lustre beamed from her gentle eyes. As she approached, Henry also looked up, and, on seeing her, he instantly dropped his eyes. I felt a strong inclination to do the same, yet anxiety and shame prevented me, and I therefore endeavoured to look on her as on one whom I had in nowise injured. But the effort was violent. Selina was the only individual of the party who was able to address her, which she did without the least embarrassment. 'Well, little lady,' she said, (for it was always with a diminutive of some kind that she addressed her sister,) 'how have you left your invalid?'

"'Not worse,' was Lucy's answer, as she at the same time tried to smile: 'thank God, she has no pain.'

"'You look pale, my fairy queen,' said Selina. 'We must consult the physician about you, as well as for the old lady.'

"'He can do me no good,' Lucy rejoined, at the same time looking anxiously towards Henry.

"'O,' said Selina, 'you would have another story to tell if Mr. Selwyn were not present.'

"'Sister,' replied Lucy, 'I never understand above half of what you say: but this I believe, that I want no physician, and that, if my heart were at ease, I should soon be as well as ever.' So saying, she sat down behind the sofa on which her sister was seated, and, leaning her head against its back, burst into tears.

"All ceremony was now over with Henry; all doubts, all suspicions, all piques, seemed in a moment to be washed away by this one fair shower of tears. He rose up in haste as soon as he perceived them, he ran to her, entreated her forgiveness for his coldness, assured her that she was now more dear to him than ever, and, in my presence and in that of her sister, he made a more

direct and unequivocal avowal of his regard for her than he had ever before done, at least before us.

"She said but little to him in reply; but begged that he would not be angry with her again, and assured him that she should now be once more as happy as it was possible for her to be while her grandmamma was in a state of suffering.

"Thus I beheld all my designing schemes frustrated at once, and followed by severe mortification: with this my punishment began.

"The next day after this occurrence had taken place, a letter arrived from a remote part of the kingdom, requiring the presence of Mr. Selwyn, on some account which I cannot well recollect, but I think it was to attend the last illness of his only remaining relation. As Henry expected to be back in about ten days or a fortnight, and as he was on such affectionate terms with his Lucy, every cloud being removed, he took leave of her with much composure, yet with a tenderness which seemed to say, 'We are intended for each other, we must never more be at variance.'

"I witnessed this parting scene, and my own selfish feelings were again engaged in contest in my mind with justice and humanity. At this time, however, I have reason to think that there was some brighter light in my soul than I had formerly perceived; for I felt that this selfishness was extremely wrong, and that I ought not to indulge it; at the same time, I could not bear to relinquish my heroic views and feelings of self-love: in consequence of which, I began to represent my case to my own mind as something very extraordinary and out of the common way. I painted myself, in my own imagination, as a second *Perpetua* or *Blandina;* as one called upon by religion to make the sacrifice of all that was dear to me on earth, and to suffer incredible trials.

"By this time, having learned that it was a frequent custom with pious persons to write journals and memorandums touching their own state, (a practice by no means without its use to characters whose minds are at all alive to a sense of their real state, but dangerous to those in whom the power of selfish feelings is not shaken,) I began to write such a memento myself; and I filled many pages with pathetic statements of my own case,

mingled with such ready-made religious expressions and pious phrases as I had acquired by reading and conversation.

"And now I began to regret that I had not one young friend to whom I could open my heart, expatiate on my sufferings and trials, and on whom I could call to pray for me; no one to whom I could state how much *I* was to be pitied because my cousins were handsomer than myself, or because Henry Selwyn loved his little adopted sister better than me, whom he could deem but an acquaintance of a day. Not that in a correspondence, real instead of ideal, I should have stated my case in a manner thus plain and straight-forward; for heroines such as I then was have a natural dislike to plain and simple statements of matters of fact.

"This habit of self-delusion cannot be wondered at in persons who are in an unchanged and unregenerate state: but it is deeply to be lamented, that there should be so much want of Christian simplicity in professing characters, so much looking away from God, and so much criminal self-solicitude.—But to proceed with my story.

"Having no bosom friend, no Delia or Araminta, to whom I dared to open my heart either by conversation or by letter, I was fain to content myself with writing a journal; of which I could give my reader many curious specimens, did not the mixture that it contains of sentiments apparently religious, and of feelings so selfish, render it difficult to select a single genuine passage which might not appear profane.

"Henry Selwyn had not left us longer than a week, and we were looking forward to his coming back, when a letter arrived from him to Lucy, stating that he had found his relative in such a condition, that he feared that he should not be able to return so soon as he had expected.

"Immediately after the receipt of this letter, we were one night suddenly alarmed, about midnight, by violent shrieks, which proceeded from our grandmother's room. I awoke, as well as the rest of the family, in excessive terror, and, dressing myself in haste, flew to the chamber, and found that the shrieks had been uttered by the maid, who slept in a closet within the room, and who had been awakened, as well as Lucy, by a heavy noise

on the floor. They had instantly both jumped up, and found the old lady lying by the grate, apparently lifeless; and as, in falling, she had come in contact with the bars, her clothes were on fire, and she was considerably burnt.

"By the time I entered the room, the flaming night-clothes had been put out, and the old lady was lifted into bed, where she was gasping between life and death; while Lucy, as pale as ashes, and looking like death itself, was supporting her pillow, being herself upon the bed.

"How to account for this accident, we knew not: as the old lady had never before been known to get out of bed during her illness without assistance; but we afterwards had reason to conclude that the occasion of her fall was a third stroke.

"There was a medical man in the village, who arrived in a few minutes, and who employed such means as relieved the old lady as far as she could be relieved. But she never afterwards appeared to be thoroughly sensible, and in fact never noticed any one but Lucy.

"A considerable space of time, however, elapsed before all that was to be done for my grandmother by the surgeon was accomplished: during which time Lucy, as I have already described her, sat supporting her on the bed, being lightly attired, and without a cap, her head-dress having fallen off in her efforts to raise her grandmother from the hearth. Her lovely figure is still present before my mind, as she gazed earnestly on the face of the surgeon when he was examining the burns: her brown hair hanging in natural ringlets about her neck, and her dimpled features still retaining that sweet infantine expression which even sorrow could not destroy.

"During this period, the window was kept open, in order to assist the laboured breathing of the old lady: and I remember seeing the flame of the candle flaring in the night air, and the ringlets gently agitated on Lucy's neck. All the servants were, however, engaged in different ways waiting on the surgeon. Every one was busily occupied but Selina and myself: what Selina was doing, I do not remember; I recollect, however, hearing her exclamations, and frequent cries of 'Well! I am sure I had no idea of all this; how strange! who could have thought of it! bless me, what could the old lady have been doing? dear me! I am glad that I was not the first

to find her!' I can well remember, too, what was passing in *my* mind at that awful period: and I have since, from the recollection of that and other equally trying circumstances of my life, been more impressed with a sense of the dreadful depravity of my nature, than from the review of all other periods of my existence.

"Instead of my being hurried away from selfish feelings by the horrors of the scene, I can recollect, that, after the very first shock was over, all my attention was, as it were, centred in self. I envied Lucy's picturesque appearance at the pillow of her grandmother; I envied her lovely look, her apparent entire forgetfulness of self, the charming expression of her countenance, and the unstudied grace of the drapery with which her childlike limbs were in part shaded. From her my thoughts wandered to the idea of Henry Selwyn: and presently I became so absorbed in a flow of selfish feelings, that I was in fact the last person in the room to remark, that the least danger to any one present could be apprehended from exposure to the night air.

"The surgeon was the first person who was aware of this danger, and he therefore ordered that the windows should be shut, and that precautions should be taken to prevent colds. He also observed Lucy's paleness, felt her pulse, bled her, and insisted on her immediately going to bed.

"The next morning, however, when he visited the family, he was alarmed at her appearance, expressed a dread that she was more seriously injured by the alarm, and the exertions which she had made, than he first apprehended, and hinted, that he believed a few weeks would decide the fate of my grandmother.

"It now certainly behooved me, with this accumulation of afflictions, to fancy myself unhappy, though I certainly was not so; because I can well recollect many circumstances and passing thoughts, which prove, upon reflection, that my mind was then quite as easy as it had ever been during the most happy periods of my life. I remember considering what mourning I should be obliged to wear in case of my grandmother's death, and thinking, with some regret, that I should not look so well in sable as my cousins, for my complexion was not so fair, and my hair was much darker. Nevertheless, though I

had leisure for this and many other reflections of the same tendency, I thought that I could not, of course, with propriety, do otherwise than seem very sad whenever the surgeon and physician made their appearance; and indeed I appeared to be so much affected when informed that they considered Lucy very ill, that they, on departing, sent Mrs. Stephens to us, who from that time was our constant visiter, and who served very much to keep up our spirits, by that parading and bustling manner for which she was far famed, and which she could exercise to equal advantage in regulating the ceremonies of a wedding and the solemnities of a funeral.

"But inasmuch as the histories of egotism are tales which have no end, I shall endeavour to put a constraint upon my strong natural propensity to speak of self, and will endeavour to proceed in my tale with accelerated speed.

"I could fill volumes with narrating the events only of the few days which immediately followed the accident of my grandmother, related above. But I shall pass over this period, so bitter on reflection, as hastily as possible. Suffice it to say, that our lovely Lucy, from that awful night, never more looked up. Towards the evening of the next day, she was taken with a vomiting of blood, owing to the breaking of a blood-vessel; and, almost before we her giddy relations had begun to apprehend her danger, this inestimable young creature expired in the arms of Mrs. Stephens.

"She died, as she had lived, perfectly serene and happy; seemingly without a doubt or a fear lest she should not find perfect peace in the bosom of her Saviour: and, after her death, her beautiful remains presented an image of sleep, so lovely, so tranquil, so unchanged from what she had been in life, that, while I looked upon her, *self itself* seemed for a moment to die within me; and, for the first time in my life, I was blessed by the experience of one comparatively pure and genuine feeling.

"This state of mind, however, did not long continue, as I shall have reason to point out in the sequel. Nevertheless, I cannot but believe that my first feelings on the occasion of the loss of Lucy were those of genuine sorrow.

"It was no small aggravation of the grief of those individuals of the family who had any feeling, to hear the calls of the poor old lady for her child, her Lucy.

"After her third fit, and sad accident, my grandmother, as I before said, never recovered her senses, and she seemed totally to have forgotten every one but Lucy. But this beloved name was ever on her lips: and she appeared to be fully aware of her absence, and lamented it in a manner the most distressing that can be imagined. 'Lucy, my beloved,' she used to say, 'where are you? Lucy, come back to me! child of my heart, whither art thou gone?' And then the poor old lady would burst into tears, and weep till confusion and forgetfulness came to her relief.

"At this time, a second letter was received from Henry Selwyn, full of expressions of the utmost tenderness to Lucy, and containing the information that his relative was better, and that he was about to commence a little tour with him for the establishment of his strength. The letter, however, concluded with an expression of the hope that he should return in a very few weeks, and see his Lucy blooming again like the Rose of Sharon.

"This letter arrived on the day following that of the death of the sweet little girl. And shall I confess, that this was the first circumstance, after that event, that awakened my selfish feelings?

"The letter contained not even a remembrance to me; not the slightest mention of my name; proving, too plainly, that the giddy and boyish writer had not a thought respecting me when I was out of his sight. Such were my mortified feelings on this occasion, that I can well remember thus apostrophizing the remains of my cousin: 'O, happy Lucy! What can be more blessed than a course like yours? How loved were you during your short life! and who can say how regretted in death?' Here, bursting into tears, I experienced the full force of that envious spirit which almost grudges a peaceful and honourable grave to its hated object.

"I shewed the letter to Mrs. Stephens, who evinced far more tender feelings on reading it than I had done, and insisted on laying it upon the bosom of her for whom it had been intended; at the same time cutting off a ringlet from the head of the fair corpse to present

to him whose regard for her had been evinced, as I then found, from his earliest youth.

"Mrs. Stephens wrote instantly to Henry, to inform him of the sad event, and to urge his immediate return, in order that he might once more behold his Lucy before she was consigned to the cold earth.

"My cousin's father was, as I before said, on the Continent, and could not possibly return in time for the funeral. It was therefore settled that Mrs. Stephens should take upon her the management of every thing; and the good lady was, I believe, not sorry to find some employment by which she might partly get rid of that heaviness of heart by which, to do her justice, she had appeared to be oppressed ever since she had ceased to hope for the life of the beloved Lucy—beloved, indeed, by all whose minds were not poisoned by envy.

"In consequence of her being thus empowered to act, Mrs. Stephens failed not presently to excite such a bustle of preparation in the house, as would have suited a much gayer occasion. Every room was speedily filled with milliners, dress-makers, and venders of sables of all kinds. She summoned her daughters for consultation; she arranged and re-arranged plans for the ceremony; and at length she determined that Lucy's remains should be followed to the grave by a number of young ladies, arrayed in white, and clothed with hoods of the same. She determined, also, to make the funeral as public as possible; and therefore invited many of the neighbouring gentlemen. She also required (that which need not have been asked) the attendance of all the poor people whom Lucy had loved; and she also sent for the little orphan whom Lucy had put to school, with the intention of having her carried in the procession.

"It may be asked, what effect all this bustle had on my mind, and on that of Selina. With respect to Selina, she wept a little once or twice during the first few days of our loss; but afterwards she settled into a kind of fixed demureness, her mouth being drawn up, her eyelids dropped, and her motions particularly slow and solemn, by which she appeared to be quite as unhappy as was necessary to those who were not very acute observers, but by which she never succeeded in deceiving me, who was more constantly with her, as appeared

from a conversation that we fell into on a certain occasion, which I, however, have forgotten. This conversation began in the following manner:—'Hoods,' said Selina, 'bless me, what frights we shall look in hoods!'

"'Frights,' I replied, 'why?'

"'All the gentlemen of the neighbourhood are to be present too: I shall be ashamed to look about me.'

"'Look about you!' I said, 'you must not look about you.'

"'O,' replied she, 'O, because of being unhappy: I must look down; yes, I know. But that won't hinder people from looking at me.'

"'How provoking it is,' I thought, 'that this girl should make all these foolish speeches, and, as it were, thus embody the very ideas which I have been indulging ever since the funeral-procession has been talked of!' I answered, however, though I was angry, 'Who will be thinking of you, Selina, on such an occasion as this?'

"'O, I don't know,' she answered; 'every body. You and I shall be first, you know; and people must see us.'

"'Ah!' said I, (and I burst into tears,) 'if either you or I had died, and it had been Lucy who was to walk at our funeral, such thoughts as those which you have now expressed would never have entered into her head;' and then renewing my tears with an emotion of real, not affected feeling, I exclaimed, 'O, Lucy! Lucy! you were too good for us! you were not fit for such company as ours! No, no; you are gone to those to whom you really belonged!'

"A tear started in Selina's eye, and she said, 'Come, Caroline, don't cry: Lucy is happy; and then, you know, we shall be the gainers.'

"'The gainers!' I said: 'what do you mean?'

"'O,' she answered, 'I mean with respect to money. You know, when one's in grief, one ought to think of every thing that may afford comfort.'

"'A person,' I replied, 'cannot be in very intense grief, who can think of such things as that.'

"'La! and why not?' she answered.

"'Because grief,' I said, 'is an absorbing passion; and, when sincere, it occupies every faculty.'

"'But I am sure,' replied she, 'I am truly sorry for

my dear little sister, and would give all that I have in the world to restore her to life. But it cannot be, you know: and what's the use of fretting?'

"So saying, she walked into the next room, where the dress-makers were engaged, and thus she left me to this sad reflection—that there was but little difference between myself and Selina; that we both thought and felt the same, but that she had not sense to conceal her views, while I well understood the necessity of dissembling: and, at that moment, what would I not have given for a better and purer state of feeling! I was ready, with St. Paul, to cry out, *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.* (Rom. vii. 18, 19.) These good and humbling thoughts, however, soon left me, and I again became the prey of vanity and selfishness.

"In proportion as the day for Lucy's funeral drew nearer, the ferment in the house became greater. I have seen things of this kind managed since, but I never could thoroughly understand how Mrs. Stephens contrived to excite the bustle which she did on this occasion. It was, however, her way; and I have often thought, that she had recourse to such means, to deaden her sensibilities. We deferred the closing of the coffin to the last moment, in hopes that Henry Selwyn would arrive in time to take a last sad farewell of his beloved Lucy. But it was not to be: he who had beheld her in the verdure and bloom of her beauty, was not to see her in her faded and withered state. The impression that was to remain, was to be left in all possible perfection. No very great change, however, had taken place in her appearance, when I looked at her for the last time, excepting that her whole countenance had then assumed an air of sadness, which it had not before presented until within the last twelve hours—a sadness which foreran that total dissolution of her earthly frame that was speedily to take place, and which formed a very melancholy contrast with the charming serenity which, while she was alive, had beamed over her lovely countenance.

"The morning of the funeral arrived; and, to my

utter amazement, from the dawn of day, the house was surrounded by multitudes of poor people, old and young, decently dressed, and shewing every symptom of sincere sorrow. The house, also, was soon filled with persons of higher rank, all anxious to shew their respect to the memory of this lovely young creature.

"I was much affected by the report of what was said in favour of Lucy, and by the tears that were shed on her account; neither did self seem again to take possession of me, till I was dressed in my funeral garments, and perceived that I presented a figure at once graceful and interesting. And I can now well remember, that, when informed that the moment was arrived at which the funeral procession was to commence, I gave one last look at myself in a large mirror, and then descended into the dining-room, where, having taken the arm of my cousin Selina, I took my place in the procession, and advanced through an avenue of people, who opened a way on the right and left to admit us to pass onward to the church, which was not half a quarter of a mile from the house.

"I can recollect, however, but little of this scene. My confusion, awe, and agitation being increased by the heterogeneous feelings of vanity, and the strange idea which I was continually indulging, that every one was looking at me, and that many were admiring me.

"The service, however, was nearly concluded, and the moment at hand when all that remained on earth of the flower and pride of our family was to be lowered down into the vault within the church, in which our grandfather was buried, when suddenly some kind of disturbance seemed to arise among the crowd, in the porch at the further end of the church, and the throng immediately opened to the right and left, to allow some one to pass. The minister made a pause; and all eyes were turned in that direction from which the sound proceeded. I looked up, and saw Henry Selwyn! He was dressed as for a journey, yet without his hat; his hair was disordered, his face flushed as if violently heated, and he came forward with a determination evident in his countenance, which seemed to say, 'I will approach; no one has a right to prevent me.' He came close up to the bier, and, as he passed, brushed so near me, that I

was obliged to give way. When he had reached the coffin, he stood still, and looked for a moment earnestly upon it, and then, with a motion as unexpected as his appearance had been a minute before, he stooped, as I thought, to kiss the name engraved upon the lid; and while so doing, he fell quite senseless upon the chest which contained the mortal remains of his Lucy.

"What immediately followed, I cannot say, nor how I conducted myself on this occasion; for I remember nothing more than confused and hurried scenes of woe succeeding each other, till I found myself in a cottage near the church, occupied by a person who had been an old servant of the family, and where were assembled also several of the young ladies who had attended the funeral, together with Mrs. Stephens, Henry Selwyn, and the surgeon. In the midst of this group, I remember observing the little orphan that had been Lucy's protegée: this poor little baby was dressed in black, and, being in the arms of the woman of the house, it was sensible of no inconvenience, and knew no sorrow.

"It appeared that Henry had been for some time insensible; but, having been bled, he was then recovering, though his countenance still expressed a degree of grief and horror which seemed to forbid all approach to him, and all attempts to yield him comfort. He, at length, however, recollected us all, bowed to us separately, and, rising hastily, kissed the infant in the arms of the poor woman, said something about its never wanting a friend, and walked out of the house, followed by the surgeon. A few minutes afterwards, we saw him riding by the church-yard rails; and the surgeon returned to the cottage, bearing Mr. Selwyn's compliments to all present, and apologizing for his so hastily leaving a place with which he found so many bitter recollections associated.

"It was with the greatest difficulty that I heard these messages with composure: it was terrible to me, thus, at this moment, to be made sensible of the defeat of those hopes which I had fondly cherished, that I should soon be able to console Henry for the loss of his Lucy. But here was, at once, such a death-blow to all my hopes of this kind, as I was not prepared to receive; and it was, in consequence, exceedingly difficult for me to conceal my anguish. I did, however, succeed, and I contrived

to make all about me believe that every tear that I shed was for Lucy, and for Lucy only.

"Events now followed each other with a bewildering rapidity. My grandmother's death succeeded her beloved Lucy's within a fortnight. Immediately after which, Selina's father arrived, and took her to London, where, being now in possession of a large fortune, she was soon married. About the same time, I heard of the death of my own father, by which circumstance I now found myself without a home; and as I did not choose to accept my uncle's proposal of taking me to Town with his daughter, I therefore followed the advice of Mrs. Stephens, and went to reside with two elderly and respectable ladies living near Reading.

"And now, my gentle reader, before I enter upon this which I may denominate the third stage of my life, I think it right to pause, and give you some account of the state of my mind, as far as I understand it, after the various severe and complicated distresses which I have described.

"I can readily feel, and acknowledge, that it was not a right state. When first I came to my grandmother's, I might truly have been said to have no religion—perhaps a few notions in my head, but no grace in my heart. My grandmother's conversation, during the short time that I enjoyed it, together with the lovely example of Lucy, had, however, tended greatly to enlarge my ideas on this subject, and, with the divine blessing, to open my mind a little to the view of my own natural depravity. But this knowledge was still very incomplete, and I was altogether in darkness (even after my afflictions) on the subject of that glorious work which the Saviour had performed for man, and on man's utter inability, apart from divine influence, to do any thing for himself. I was, in consequence, still strong in the idea of my own self-sufficiency, and I was destitute of humility: I could not bear to see any one either preferred before me, or in the enjoyment of any privilege which I did not myself possess.

"The horrors which I had witnessed, and the great mortality that I had seen in my own family, had, however, considerably alarmed me, by bringing death so nearly and repeatedly before me; and, like one who is

in dread of a halter, I began to think it was time for me to set about something in earnest, in order to secure to myself the favour of Heaven.

"These were the views and feelings that I entertained when I arrived at my new abode, of which I am now about to give the description.

"Branching off from the highroad, at some little distance from the town of Reading, on the Wiltshire side, is a lane fenced on each side by a quick hedge, always kept neatly trimmed. This lane is so little frequented by any but foot passengers, that it is as green and soft under the feet as the most verdant lawn. At the distance of nearly half a mile from the main road, this lane opens into a small common, where are a few thatched cottages, with their gardens of pinks and tulips, a small pool or pond in which geese delight to dabble, and a few black-nosed sheep which share the common with the geese.

"Just in that part of the lane where it almost imperceptibly begins gradually to diverge, till it forms part of the common, stood the neat, well-built brick house occupied by the two Misses Grimshaw, my landladies.

"These ladies were sisters, had always lived single, possessed the house in which they resided, and also some money; but yet they were not above adding a little to their incomes, by receiving into their family a young lady of respectable name and fortune, and devoting to her their two best rooms.

"I have before told you, that I have always had an inclination to fancy groups and figures for pictures: why should I not, therefore, give you a sketch of my new abode? It was a high house, built principally of brick, and decorated with ornaments of stone. In the centre of the front was the hall door; and on each side there was a parlour, with Venetian windows. In the front was a straight walk, together with several stiff parterres; and on one side, running parallel with the lane, was a long inclosure of a garden, through the centre of which there ran a green walk, terminated by an arbour.

"To this scene I was introduced by Mrs. Stephens: and as my spirits were much depressed when I came into this family, I found the quiet attentions of the old ladies

very consolatory to me, and their continual old-fashioned tittle tattle was not altogether unentertaining.

"These good old ladies were what I conclude more common characters fifty years ago than they are now. They entertained numerous old-fashioned ideas of propriety and impropriety, for which they could give no other reason whatever, than that some things were proper because they were proper, and that other things were neither to be done nor thought of because they were improper. And if I attempted to argue with them about any of these prohibited points, which I sometimes did from mere caprice, the elder sister in one key, and the younger in another, would generally take upon themselves to bring me to reason with arguments much to this effect: 'Why, my dear, such a thing never was heard of; it stands to reason; it could not be; we are astonished how a young lady of your fortune and condition should ever think of such a thing.'

"Now, inasmuch as these good ladies could give no better account of the hope that was in them, (for they seemed very pious as far as they knew,) than for their having a tansy pudding at Easter, or for leaving off their flannel caps on the night of Good Friday, it is not to be supposed that I acquired much knowledge of divine things from them. I was not, however, unhappy with them; and, perhaps, the retired and inglorious situation which I occupied in this family might have been judged particularly suited, humanly speaking, to repress the envious and selfish feelings of my mind. But it did not, however, in this respect, prove so useful to me as might have been expected: for, as I was known to have a large fortune, as I was fashionable, and perhaps rather pleasing in my appearance, the old ladies became, in some degree, proud of having me for their inmate, and I was, in consequence, not a little praised and fondled by them, so that if I had but a finger-ache, I was put to bed, and treated with panada and treacle posset.

"During the first six months of my residence with the Misses Grimshaw, I cultivated no acquaintance abroad, it being in the winter season, and my mind being also much depressed at the strange turn which had taken place in the affairs of my own family; but at the end of that period I began to indulge a close attachment to a

Miss Letitia Arkwright, a young lady who came sometimes from Reading to visit my landladies.

"This young person possessed nothing which could give umbrage to my envious spirit; none of the composure, simplicity, or angelic softness of the lovely Lucy, nor even the delicate beauty of Selina: on the contrary, her features were ordinary, her complexion was sallow, and her person coarse. But she was agreeable in conversation, insinuating and persuasive in her manners, and a high professor of religion. She was, in fact, the first person with whom I had ever associated who understood the common modes of speech and the ordinary topics of conversation generally current throughout the modern religious circles.

"This young lady had associated with some of the characters the most eminent for piety in Reading and London; she was conversant with the names and also with the various gifts and endowments of the several principal preachers in England; she could define, with the nicest accuracy, the most minute differences of opinion between every sect and denomination of Christians in the British islands; she spoke familiarly of the conversion of her neighbours, and she pronounced without hesitation on the spiritual state of every person with whom she was acquainted. She used a vast variety of phrases, which at first seemed quaint to me, but with which I gradually became familiar, and which she always employed when speaking on religious subjects, and she appeared to think very little of the piety of those who did not use precisely the same modes of speaking as herself. She was represented by many in Reading as a pattern of activity in doing good, she was said to have a peculiar facility in talking to the poor relative to the state of their souls; and it was, moreover, hinted concerning her, that she had converted many persons from the error of their ways.

"Such was Miss Letitia Arkwright, the lady whom I chose for my intimate friend, and through whose means it was generally supposed that I, also, had become converted.

"The good old ladies with whom I resided had a very high opinion of this Miss Arkwright, who was a distant relation of theirs; and they, in consequence, encouraged

our intimacy, and took pleasure in seeing it grow, although they did not entirely agree with their cousin in all her views and feelings with respect to religion: for, as I have already stated, these good ladies shrunk with horror from the fancied contagion of any innovations, and they would, in consequence, had they been born at Ephesus in the time of the apostles, have continued to worship the goddess Diana, even in spite of St. Paul and Barnabas themselves.

"But, be this as it may, these good ladies readily encouraged our intimacy, and moreover allowed their footboy, who went every day to Reading, to carry our notes backwards and forwards: for, when Miss Arkwright had, as she persuaded herself, converted me to her own way of thinking in reference to religious matters, or, as I might more properly say, when she had taught me to use her language, she proceeded to perfect her work by a constant interchange of billets, in which she communicated to me all her feelings and trials, and encouraged me, in return, to disclose all mine to her.

"Where religion is of the right sort, it invariably produces two effects: the one is humility; and the other, composure, or peace of mind. It is said in Scripture, that the wicked are like the troubled sea, which continually casts up mire and dirt, being incapable of rest. Accordingly, when the work of true conversion has taken place, a peculiar peace is diffused throughout the soul; and activity itself becomes a firm and unruffled quality of the mind, being divested of that restlessness with which it is always accompanied when it characterizes an unregenerate individual. But the change which I had undergone by my associating with Miss Arkwright, was so far from rendering me more humble and more composed, that, day after day, in proportion as I lost the impression of my late sorrows, I grew more and more restless, and increasingly anxious to become an object of some importance in the estimation of my fellow-creatures.

"I had no one to introduce me into the fashionable world, and I felt, in fact, some kind of superstitious dread of earthly gaieties; but I was, nevertheless, as anxious to shew myself off in the front row of a public chapel, or in a Sunday-school procession, as any young beauty had ever been to display herself at a birth-night ball.

"Such being my feelings, it will not be wondered at, if I inform the reader of these pages, that, before my friendship with my amiable Letitia was three months old, I joined her in all her excursions, I accompanied her from chapel to chapel in quest of new preachers, I ran with her from one sick chamber to another, I *chaproned* her Sunday-school children in and out of church, I helped her to plait straw for their bonnets, and to teach her pupils to sing in tune. I also assisted in stoning raisins for Christmas puddings to regale the children, together with sundry other matters of the same consequence, in which I not only rendered some service to the rising generation, but also obtained for myself many pretty compliments, and gratified my love of the picturesque: for I could not doubt that my elegant person, grouped with the surrounding unmeaning figures of the infant poor, whether observed, in the Sunday-school, by the young minister, or, in the gallery of the chapel, by the whole congregation, afforded an object both lovely in itself, and highly interesting in the abstract, as it presented a proof of the power of religion in enabling youth and beauty to triumph over the world, and trample its vanities beneath their feet.

"In the midst of these illusions, it certainly did occur to me to ask myself, once or twice, whether I and my friend were really doing any great good with all this parade and bustle; and I could not help considering whether all this running from house to house, this collecting of children merely to dress and undress them, and parade them through the streets, could be counted, after all, much better than mere eye-service. But these gleams of clear light were few and very transient, and they seldom had power to disperse, for more than a moment at a time, the deep shades of selfishness which clouded and darkened my whole soul.

"On subsequent reflection, I have thought that it sometimes pleases the Almighty to make use of instruments, in themselves worthless, for the advancement of his kingdom, in the same manner as he employed the ravens in feeding the prophet in the wilderness; and those who are really anxious for the glory of God, are ready, with St. Paul, to rejoice that Christ is preached, whether it be of strife or otherwise. But the question

here is this—whether, in such parading scenes as those that we have just noticed, there is aught of Christ to be found, and whether they do not too often tend to retard rather than to advance the cause of genuine religion.—But to proceed.

"I know not what the more reflecting portion of the good people of Reading might have thought of me during the few years that I was with them; but of this I am assured, that, among a certain set, my praises ran high, and I was held forth as a pattern of all that was good by many excellent parents, who, at the same time, could they have had their wishes, and have seen their daughters like me, would perhaps have wished ten times more earnestly again to see them what they were before.

"Several years thus passed away, during which time I became a kind of idol among a certain circle of old women, and well-meaning but ignorant persons, in the middle classes, who constituted the greater part of our religious society; and, from my constantly hearing religious matters discussed, and my attending the ministry of various preachers, some good, some indifferent, but all expressing themselves in the same style of language, and using similar phrases, I insensibly acquired a good deal of head-knowledge of a certain kind: neither did I want the art of displaying this knowledge with some skill, and with no small credit to myself, among my own set. But, as is common to those who associate only with one description of persons, and who have not the opportunity of seeing and conversing with others, I became very dogmatical, and deemed every one as reprobate who did not employ precisely our own peculiar modes of speech, and embrace our opinions, on the minor as well as on the essential points of religion.

"Having thus described my state of mind, I leave it to any reader acquainted with Christian experience to judge whether I grew in grace while residing with my good friends the Misses Grimshaw, or whether I was not, upon the whole, in a worse state, after I had been with them some time, than when I first came to their house. As I, however, before said, I procured to myself a very good name, which, after a while, stood me in stead, in the manner which I shall explain.

"I had been in England about six years, more than

four of which I had spent in the neighbourhood of Reading, when, one day, as I was walking along one of the least frequented streets of that town, I saw a gentleman at a distance whose appearance struck me so much, that I trembled from head to foot. He approached, and I found that I was not mistaken in my first surmise. This person was no other than Henry Selwyn, dressed in a clerical habit, and but little altered from what I had once known him, excepting that he had become taller, and that somewhat of an air of seriousness, if not of sorrow, appeared to characterize his entire person and demeanour. He had, as I afterwards found, just been inducted into a large living in one of the western counties of England, and he was then come to Reading to settle some business which could not be transacted in his absence.

"It seems, that he had imagined I was returned to the West Indies, as he had not heard of my father's death; and he was quite as much surprised to see me, as I was delighted to meet with him.

"I might now fill a volume with pourtraying the immediate effects of this meeting, and in giving a description of the various scenes which followed it; but egotism the most barefaced would shrink from a task like this. The remembrance of past happiness is always bitter, but there are some circumstances on the recollection of which it is agony to dwell. Amidst all my vanity and selfishness, I was really attached to Henry Selwyn, and I cannot remember the time when I ever sincerely regarded another of his sex. My reader will not, therefore, wonder to find me confess, that, after many meetings with Henry in Misses Grimshaw's parlour, after having spent many hours in hearing him talk of Lucy, I was by no means sorry to discover symptoms of a transfer of his affections from her from whom he was separated by death to one who still lived, and who possibly might reconcile him to life.

"But, to make my story short, after a suitable time employed in courtship, we were married. I handsomely took leave of the good old ladies my hostesses; and, taking Letitia, who had been my bridemaid, with me, we proceeded with my dear husband to the home that was in waiting for us.

"We travelled slowly, and arrived, on the evening of the second day, at a spacious and venerable-looking parsonage-house, situated in the centre of a considerable market-town, where my husband would have been regarded as a sort of bishop, had there not been, unfortunately, another parish in the town, and, consequently, another rector, another rectory, and another church. At that time, however, I was too happy, far too happy, to think of matters of this kind, although afterwards they proved a source of great trouble to me. Indeed, I had then of late been so forced out of my ordinary mode of speaking and thinking by the strong influence of other feelings, that I had forgotten, for a time, all the religion, whether real or pretended, which, as it were, belonged to myself, and I had no other thought beyond my desire to speak and act just as my Henry wished. In this state I must, therefore, have appeared to him quite different from what I really was; and that not so much from my having any plan to deceive him, as from the strength of my regard for him, which absorbed, for the time, all other considerations, and left me no higher gratification than that of making myself agreeable to the object of my attachment.

"Thus the harshness and selfishness of my nature, my vanity, my love of display, my natural coldness and deadness of heart, my pride and ambition, were for a time concealed from him whom it most behooved to know them.

"At the close of the second day after our marriage, we reached our habitation, which was a noble old parsonage-house, standing in a garden, and opening towards the street. The garden at the back of the house was beautifully adorned with forest trees, and laid out in parterres of flowers, in such a manner, that, although in the centre of a large town, we beheld immediately around us nothing but what was elegant and agreeable, and we were regaled with the chirpings of the linnet and the robin, while our near neighbours heard nothing but the din and buzz of the crowded city. Besides two large and handsome sitting-rooms, the parsonage-house contained a good study, with a bow-window, which opened towards the most lovely, retired, and well-arranged part of the garden.

"After having shewn me the other parts of the house, which were all, in their way, complete and admirable, my beloved husband led me into his study; and there, placing me upon a sofa near the open window, (for it was summer-time,) 'My beloved Caroline,' he said, 'this is my sanctum sanctorum: I admit no company here; but to you it is at all times accessible.'

"We then entered into conversation; and Mr. Selwyn disclosed to me at that time many of those private feelings respecting his views of religion and the state of his own heart, which proved how deeply he was interested in the cause of his God.

"We had continued for some time conversing in this happy way, waiting the summons to a late dinner which we had ordered on our arrival, when Mr. Selwyn was called out on some business, and I arose, at the same time, to examine the books which were ranged in large cases around the room, when I perceived, hanging on one side of a bookcase, and in a remarkably good light, a small painting set in a deep black frame. I approached it, little suspecting, however, what it was, and found, with astonishment, that it presented a most exact representation of Lucy, at full length, though of a very small size. The little figure was dressed in a white frock, such as Lucy had commonly worn; while her fair hair appeared hanging in charming ringlets round her face, and upon her polished neck. A beautiful landscape, rich with woods and waterfalls, filled up the back-ground of the scene; and in the front, at the feet of the little figure, lay a beautiful fawn, whose meek and tender eyes were raised up to its gentle companion, only more lovely and interesting than itself.

"My first emotions, on seeing this representation of her who was the prototype, in my mind, of all that was admirable in her sex, and whose early death had, as it were, impressed an indelible seal upon her excellencies, was a burst of tears, unaffected, sincere, and affectionate tears. But self was not thus to be put off: this discovery of Lucy's picture in the sanctum sanctorum of my husband was not so easily to be passed by; it was not natural to me habitually thus to feel for others, without reference to myself; this had never been my practice; and now was not the time when it was probable I should

begin so to do, just in the acme of my bridal glory—at the moment of my finding myself at the summit of my wishes. Prosperity is not favourable to the improvement of a selfish character: not that I mean to say, that adversity can effectually amend it; on the contrary, distress frequently has a tendency to harden it. No; there is nothing short of divine power which can soften the heart of stone into the relentings of a heart of flesh.—But to proceed.

"My first emotion, as I before said, on seeing my late lovely cousin's picture in my husband's study, was of an amiable and salutary character; but other thoughts speedily arose in my mind. 'And is it thus,' I said to myself, 'that he who pretends to be entirely devoted to me, reserves in his heart an idol, to which his secret devotions are paid? O Lucy!' I added, aloud, 'happy, happy Lucy! most happy in thy grave: O that I could change places with thee! that I could lay my head on thy cold pillow!'

"Envious and jealous feelings are, as I have before remarked, very shy of obtruding themselves. Even when compelled by their own strength to come forward, they will choose any name but their own, and they will attempt to impose themselves under any other appearance than that which is natural to them.

"This being the case, I was anxious to conceal every emotion of jealousy from my husband. I accordingly hastened from the study, and did not appear before him again till sunshine was restored to my countenance.

"Notwithstanding this circumstance of which I have spoken, nothing occurred to interrupt our peace during the first few months of our marriage. Few men, perhaps, were ever more formed to contribute to the happiness of a wife than was the man who had fallen to my lot. He was pious, humble, tender, cheerful, full of information, and he possessed the ability of communicating his sentiments in a manner the most agreeable, perhaps, of any person with whom I ever met. More than this, he was the man of my choice; the only one whom I had ever loved: and could I but have forgotten that I was not the object of his first love, I should not have had a wish ungratified—I fancied, at least, that I should not. But the evil that assailed me was not from

without: no possible combination of circumstances could have made me happy in the state of mind in which I then was; for I was entirely devoted to self, and wholly influenced by the merest selfish feelings. But, as I before remarked, no unpleasant occurrence, during the first few months of our marriage, had any power to disturb our comfort; for my husband was evidently devoted to me, and as I was newly arrived in the town, a bride, and supposed to have a large fortune, much respect was paid me, and self was, in consequence, as highly gratified as it could well desire.

"Several events, however, in the mean time took place, which I shall relate as succinctly as possible. I have already informed my reader, that our town consisted of two parishes; that in the lower part of the town being in the charge of my dear husband, and the other in the higher part being under the care of a certain rich old gentleman, who had but lately become a widower, and without children. The two parish churches were called the high and the low; not so much with a reference to the particular situations of the buildings, as to the characters of their respective rectors; the one being a man of the old school, a great stickler for the honour of the cloth, and the other, which was my beloved husband, one in whom all views of self-exaltation were absorbed by the earnest desire which he cherished of promoting the glory of God.

"But, notwithstanding the very great difference that existed between these two ministers, namely, Mr. Selwyn and Dr. Delaney, when I was introduced into this society, there was a very good understanding subsisting between them, and the doctor seemed very willing to allow the views and doctrines espoused by my husband, on consideration of some little acts of kindness which he was ever ready to perform for him; such as now and then reading prayers for him on a week-day, &c. &c. and sending him his first peas and finest peaches and apricots out of his garden. In return for which, the old gentleman, as I before said, permitted Mr. Selwyn to think for himself on matters of divinity, contenting himself with speaking of him, not only behind his back, but also in his presence, as a good man, but one whose head on some subjects was not altogether sound.

"Dr. Delaney was, however, a man of family, and prided himself on making a good figure in a drawing-room. He, therefore, on my appearance as a bride, immediately came to see me, failing not to pay me every compliment which is thought seasonable on such occasions, and he was indeed so assiduous in his attentions, that it appeared as if he wished that something more than common civility should subsist between us.

"I had always used myself to the habit of indulging in strong likings and aversions, and I had not unfrequently taken a dislike on much slighter grounds than that on which I now did for the doctor: but the old gentleman had scarcely been twice in my company, before I expressed an utter abhorrence of his sentiments to my husband, and asked him what could induce him to bear with the haughty insolence with which he treated his understanding.—'Why, my dear,' I said, 'I see it as plainly as I now see you, that the old gentleman looks on your divinity as not only unsound, but absurd.'

"'Well, my Caroline,' he replied, 'and if it is so, what harm does that do me?'

"'And what good,' I answered, 'is there in allowing yourself to be thus treated?'

"'Much, very much,' he said. 'In the first place, I render my religion amiable and acceptable in the estimation of my brother, and I do all that in me lies to promote the peace of the town; and you will oblige me much, my beloved,' he added, 'if you will henceforth forward this my desire of living in peace with the doctor.'

"I bowed in apparent compliance, although certainly not with the best grace; but it was early days with us yet, and I had not yet ventured to shew my husband that I could assume a cloudy as well as a bright countenance.

"'As I did not alter in my manner to the old doctor, he still continued to visit us: and though the oftener I saw him the less I liked him, yet I refrained for some time from mentioning him again to Mr. Selwyn; but I was not so cautious with respect to what I said of him to my bosom friend and bridemaid, who had kindly promised to spend the first six months of our marriage with us.

"Letitia, at first, heard my remarks on the doctor with the same kind of encouraging smiles with which she received all my other communications; but, after a while, I perceived that she hearkened to them with more reserve, and, at length, acknowledged that she thought, if she must speak her mind, that I did not fully understand the old gentleman, and that she believed him to be a very worthy man, though, certainly, rather dark on some points.

"'Dark, Letitia!' I repeated; 'dark as pitch! His is indeed a palpable, an Egyptian darkness!'

"Letitia made me no answer, and I felt both offended and surprised; for this was the first time that my bosom friend had presumed to offer an opinion contrary to that avowed by me. The reason, however, of our present difference was soon explained, for, before the expiration of Letitia's six months, Dr. Delaney solicited and readily obtained the honour of her hand; and I thereby suddenly saw my quondam humble friend exalted to be the first lady in the town, while I was obliged to content myself with the second place. I was, however, fully sensible that the indulgence of uneasy feelings of this kind was so decidedly vulgar, that I would rather have died than avow them. I therefore endeavoured to disguise them with the semblance of satisfaction, and I failed not to say, in every company, 'Well, nothing that ever happened to me has given me more pleasure than this marriage of poor dear Letitia Arkwright's. She will make the old gentleman such a comfortable wife! such a good nurse! Well, I had no idea of her ever doing so well, for the poor girl had no fortune: and though I call her a girl, she is not so young either. I have known her for these six years; and she looked as old, when I first saw her, as she does now.'

"Thus I used to run on about her; not, indeed, in my husband's presence, for I feared his penetration: and, as I have had repeated occasion to remark, such feelings as I then cherished, and as I fear I am not now free from, though I trust they are somewhat subdued by the divine power, are exceedingly shy of discovery, and desirous of disguise.

"In the mean time, while I was going about uttering my congratulatory panegyrics, every thing appeared to

be upon the most friendly footing between me and the new bride. We often met, and she expressed the pleasure that she felt in the consideration that we should not now be compelled to part, but might live and die in one town.

"Fond as I had always fancied myself, and affected to be, of Letitia, it is now very evident to me, that my apparent regard proceeded only from the gratification that I found in the assiduous court that she had paid to me. She had, either unintentionally or through design, found out my weak side, and she attached me to herself by flattering that weakness. But now that she presumed to consider herself as my equal, and to treat me as such, I felt my heart withdrawing itself from her; and I now thought that I perceived, even in her praise, a coarseness which filled me with disgust. But, on my expressing to my Henry these newly awakened feelings of dislike to Letitia, he, to my great amazement, confessed that he had never regarded her in any other light than that in which I then beheld her, and that he had not been without surprise at my having selected such a companion and bosom friend.

"'And why then,' said I, indignantly, 'did you allow me to choose her as my bridemaid, and to bring her here?'

"'Because,' he added, smiling, 'because, my Caroline, I thought that in the choice of your female friends you had a right to please yourself.'

"'Notwithstanding this sweetness of his manner, I felt almost inclined to quarrel with him for not checking this intimacy, which I now began so sincerely to regret, I, however, now said no more, finding that my complaints only turned against myself.

"In the mean time, as I had but little encouragement to open my mind to any one on the subject of my dislikes, I kept up appearances with my old friend, and the two rectors' ladies were, no doubt, considered as models of the most perfect and unreserved friendship.

"Still, amidst all my uneasiness, my self-love was, nevertheless, much gratified in possessing such a husband as my Henry. Independent of his excellencies in private life, I had the pleasure of witnessing the admiration which he excited whenever he appeared in public,

His person and countenance were remarkably fine, his voice was deep and melodious, his elocution peculiarly good, and his doctrines were truly evangelical. Hence it cannot be questioned that he never preached without exciting admiration, and that many souls were won by his ministry. The most humble woman might, therefore, have found it difficult not to be proud of such a man; and it will not be questioned that I, who never had been humble, was exceedingly elated at hearing his praises from the congregation as I passed from my pew after the sermon on the Sabbath-day; neither was I a little delighted when I saw by what crowds he was followed, and as I heard, at the same time, of the emptiness of Dr. Delaney's church.

"I can now recollect, with a degree of anguish which I should find it difficult to express, how, during the first few months of my bridal happiness, I used to hasten towards the vestry immediately after service, and return exulting through the congregation, hanging upon the arm of this elegant and accomplished man, proud of my husband, proud of his appearance, proud of his religion, proud of his talents, and proud of his popularity! O, vanity! vanity! how mistaken are those who expect to detect thine influence only amidst scenes of worldly pomp and pleasure! The unregenerate heart finds fuel for self-love in every situation of life, and, I might almost say, in death itself.

"There was, however, a certain something, which for a long time restrained me from acknowledging to my husband the pride that I felt in possessing, as my own, a man so admired. It happened, however, that my vanity was so strongly excited on one occasion, that I could no longer repress the expression of my feelings.

"A certain pious nobleman and his lady were visiting in our neighbourhood, and, on one Sunday, during afternoon service, they drove up, in their coach-and-four, to the church-door, and, proceeding up the aisle, were ushered into the rector's pew, in which I was sitting. My husband preached, as usual, his manner being so wholly unchanged, that I supposed he was not aware of the honour done to him by the presence of the noble strangers. I, however, had my eyes almost immoveably fixed upon them, and I read, with delight, the eager in-

terest evidently painted on their countenances. After service, they bowed to me with the utmost politeness; and, perhaps guessing who I was, expressed their highest sense of the gratification that they had received, not only praising the matter, but the manner of the sermon.

"We parted with bows on both sides, and I instantly hastened to join my husband; to whom, as soon as I found ourselves alone, I began to relate all that had passed in the church, and commenced with asking him whether he had seen Lord and Lady D—— walk up the centre aisle.

"He answered calmly in the affirmative.

"'I thought,' said I, 'that you had not seen them.'

"'And why, my love?' was his reply.

"'Because,' I answered, 'you never changed countenance.'

"'Changed countenance!' he reiterated; and such a glow and flush arose in his cheeks as I had never seen in them before, neither could I then understand what had at that time excited it, for he did not speak, but seemed absorbed in meditation.

"Presuming, however, that he was not displeased at what I had said, I proceeded to give him some account of Lord and Lady D——'s remarks on his sermon, and the admiration which they had expressed. But, suddenly interrupting me, 'O my Caroline!' he rejoined, 'my dear Caroline! if you love me, if you desire my spiritual welfare, beware of polluting my mind with the sound of human praise. If there is any one thing for which I have prayed more than for another, it is this—that I might be blessed in my ministry with a single eye, and that I might never be led to seek any glory but that of my crucified Saviour.

"'What, my beloved wife,' he added, tenderly taking my hand, 'what, humanly speaking, has rendered the visible Church a barren wilderness, excepting this spirit of self-love, which has more or less pervaded many of its ministers and teachers, and this spirit of idolatry, which has possessed such numbers of the people? Every man either sets himself up as an idol, or exalts his teacher to the same impious elevation. But I have prayed, I have prayed earnestly, to be kept from this sin: and, if you value my happiness and welfare, Caroline, you will

never more repeat any thing which you may hear of me, be it good, or be it evil; for I consider myself, in my character as a minister, as accountable to my God alone, and by the hope of his approval only do I desire my services to be prompted.'

"So saying, he left me alone, in no very comfortable state of mind; for I both feared that I had offended him, and I was, also, thoroughly mortified by his too evident superiority over myself.

"It was in my husband's study that this conversation had taken place, and, when he left me, I was sitting exactly opposite to the little picture of Lucy which I have before spoken of. While I was deeply engaged in the comparison between Mr. Selwyn's state of mind, as he had described it but a moment previous, and my own, such as I had ever felt it to be, (for I never could remember the time when my exertions were not influenced by the spirit of eye-service,) my attention was suddenly arrested by the sweet portrait of Lucy, as the reflected light of the afternoon sun shed over it a rich glow, by which it appeared in the most striking point of view. The painter had been particularly happy in preserving the holy and gentle expression of the original countenance, and the dovelike eyes of the little figure seemed, at that instant, to be fixed upon me with such an expression of holy harmlessness and entire freedom from passion as we sometimes see in lovely infants when they appear to be looking unconsciously upon the angry contests of the elders of the family.

"Lucy had ever been to me an object of the keenest envy, and that baleful passion again rekindled within me at this moment; insomuch so, that I burst into tears, turned from the picture, and, in a fit of excessive ill-humour, withdrew to my chamber, where, for a long time, I indulged myself in bitter weeping. But, as my husband had been suddenly called from home on some parochial duty, I had leisure to wipe away my tears before his return. For I was then just in the humour to consider myself a heroine; and it is a part of that self-exalted character to weep in secret, and to appear all beautiful resignation in the presence of the fancied tyrant. Thus my afflictions continued to be, for a time, unobserved by my husband, who came in, at a late hour,

somewhat fatigued with the duties of the day, and with his mind full of the distresses of some sick person by whom he had been praying.

"The little cloud in this way blew over; and, during the course of the same week, we were invited to dine at Dr. Delaney's, to meet Lord and Lady D——, who I found were remotely connected with the old doctor.

"Mrs. Delaney evidently considered herself to be indeed in her glory on this occasion, though she made me blush for myself many times, when I remembered that this woman had been my chosen and most intimate associate.

"During dinner, she talked without intermission, addressing Lady D—— with the most servile and yet familiar flattery, and treating me as a kind of upper servant; at the same time interlarding all her discourse with a sort of ready-made religious expressions, and a peculiar set of phrases which are in the mouth of all professors of a certain rank in life.

"After dinner, we withdrew to the drawing-room; and then Mrs. Delaney began to open her mind, as she called it, to Lady D——, or, rather, to detail before that lady, who, little as I saw of her, appeared to me a truly pious and elegant woman, the account of her own experience, of the rise of her friendship for me, (a part of her story of which I now began to be ashamed,) of her present happiness with Dr. Delaney, and of her plans for advancing the cause of true religion in the town.

"On this last topic she expatiated very largely, told the lady of all her schemes, and finished by carelessly adding, that she was sure of my co-operation in all that she desired; thus assuming to herself a pre-eminence which I was by no means inclined to yield her: for I had not yet learned to say, with St. Paul, *What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.* (Phil. i. 18.)

"But it may be said, in my behalf, that I did not see aught of Christ in all this parade and talk. Certainly I did not: nevertheless, there can scarcely be any question that benefit is derived to some individuals from every public charity, however ill contrived, however deficient in point of spirituality, however blended with evil; and on this account I ought to have rejoiced in the proposal of

any plan by which the slightest good might be effected.—But to proceed.

"I returned home that evening in a very mortified state, plainly perceiving that I should become a mere cipher in the town, unless I exerted myself in promoting some public work before Mrs. Delaney's active spirit began to set itself in motion.

"The doctor and his bride had resolved on taking a journey to Bath, and they were to set out on the following Monday, to be absent for some weeks. I waited only, therefore, for their departure, and, when I thus saw the coast clear, I set to work to establish a school of industry in the centre of the town, which was to receive the children of both parishes.

"Mr. Selwyn, as soon as he heard of my plan, gave me the greatest encouragement, and placed a fifty-pound note in my hands for helping forward my purpose. I also met with the most flattering support from many of the ladies in the town and neighbourhood; and, in short, all difficulties were so soon and so easily overcome, that, before my bosom friend returned, I had procured a large room in the situation that I wished, I had assembled nearly two hundred children, and had set them all to spin and knit, and read in the primer, and I had enjoyed the pleasure of seeing them paraded to and from church in a uniform of my own choosing. I had also the satisfaction of receiving many congratulations on the subject, and of hearing myself called a mother in Israel by many well-meaning people, who knew less of me than I did of myself.

"It was on the occasion of the first appearance of the children at church, that I had a very serious and affecting conversation with my husband. It commenced by my expressing myself pleased with what I had done, and asking him if he did not think that the little ones appeared to advantage.

"'My dear Caroline,' he answered, 'so far every thing is right. But I wish you to consider the proper end of all charities of this kind; and to observe, that if the grand object is not habitually kept in view, no divine blessing can ever be expected upon the work.

"'There is often much, too much, of self-seeking in all undertakings of this kind; too much of the pharisa-

ical spirit of desiring the praise of men. Hence proceeds much parade, much bustle, much cleansing of the outside of the cup and platter, but at the same time little if any of that simple spirit which induces the Christian teacher constantly to aim at directing the eye of his pupil towards the Saviour.

"'These establishments, of which we are speaking, my beloved,' he said, 'are only valuable in the proportion in which there is the presence of the Saviour vouchsafed to them; in proportion as faith and holiness, Christian humility, and, in short, as true religion abounds. When these are wanting in the manager, or when the well-meaning directors fail either in diligence or watchfulness, it is a question with me, whether he who collects and associates a number of children together is not injuring rather than benefiting mankind.'

"It might surely have been expected, that, having such a faithful monitor at home, I should employ every possible exertion to render my services in my school pure and unalloyed by worldly motives. But although I loved and honoured my husband above all human beings, yet my self-love was even greater than my conjugal affection: and, when I was out of his sight, and acting with a view to the observation of others, my vanity wholly overpowered me; in consequence of which, though I visited my school on most days, I consider that I did really nothing when there—that is, nothing that was calculated to promote the spiritual good of the children. It is true, that I bustled from room to room, I changed the plans, scolded the teachers, displayed my own knowledge, gossiped with the other visiters, reproved the children in a language that they could but half comprehend, bestowed rewards on the pertest of them, set the elder ones among them to tyrannize over the younger, caused all of them to sing certain hymns without their understanding the meaning of a single sentiment contained in them, and procured long prayers to be said in the hearing of the little ones, of which they did not understand a syllable; in short, I occasioned a general stir, while I was wholly prevented by my self-love from observing that I was not made the means of bringing any thing to pass which could be deemed in the least degree spiritually good.

'After a while, Mrs. Delaney came home; and (as I was soon told) expressed great anger at my establishment, although she did not decline taking the place which had been reserved for her in our committee.

"And now, from this time I may date the subsequent contest which openly began to discover itself between me and Letitia. It first arose at a meeting of our committee, in which she opposed every thing which I suggested, though under the cloak of friendship, calling me, at the same time, her dear, good friend, her kind Caroline, &c. &c. But, after this period, I observed that these endearing epithets gradually became less and less frequent, as did our visits, till at length we had become declared rivals, and, as is usually the case with rivals when they occupy situations of equal influence, we had each our avowed partisans, and divided the town between us.

"This animosity at first appeared to be unobserved by Mr. Selwyn, who continued his visits to the doctor, adding, also, various other acts of kindness; till at length Mrs. Delaney became so violent against me, that I could no longer conceal from my husband, what I supposed he had never noticed, viz. our little jealousies.

"He smiled when he heard my confession, and calmly said, 'My dear Caroline, when will you rise superior to these things? have you not a husband who loves you above all the world? have you not an ample fortune, and a happy home? and what then signifies what is said of you?'

"He then again took occasion to point out the danger of our inordinately either desiring human approbation, or dreading human censure; adding, 'Let us pray, let us pray without ceasing for that meek and holy spirit, whereby alone we may be enabled to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, and to fulfil the law of love towards our neighbour. O for that spirit of self-denial,' he added, 'which elevates its possessor above the tempestuous skies of this lower world, and enables him to press forward in the path of duty, without deviation, and without pause! Visit your poor people, my Caroline, and lead them to your Saviour. Ever keep the same object in view with regard to your school; and suffer neither the praises nor the censures of your fellow-creatures to reach beyond your ears.'

"'I am, then,' I said, 'to bear all the indignities with which my enemies choose to load me? and I am to understand that you refuse to declare yourself displeased with those who injure your wife?'

"'I desire, my dear Caroline,' replied he, 'to live in peace; and I wish that you could resolve to do the same.'

"I was sullen, and acknowledged that I had not been pleased at his continued kindness to Doctor Delaney, when he knew, at the same time, how disrespectfully his wife treated me.

"He stated to me the importance of his maintaining a friendship with his brother rector for the good of the town.

"'The town!' I said; 'and so you love the town better than your wife?'

"He answered me with warmth, charged me with selfishness, and left me in anger.

"I was irritated at this charge; and from that time I gradually became less anxious to conceal my ill temper from him: for I never could wholly divest my mind of the idea, that, had Lucy lived, he would not have married me; and the feeling which arose from this thought habitually dwelt upon my mind, and excited increasing irritation within me.

"I have now brought my history down to the second year of our marriage; at which period I gave birth to a daughter, who promised to possess no small degree of loveliness.

"It had been my desire that this child should be named after myself; and when she was about a week old, I hinted my wish to my husband; but I was surprised to find that he gave me a slight answer, and turned off the discourse to another subject.

"It is common for parents to think their own offspring beautiful, let them be ever so plain. But my child was counted lovely by all who saw her, and that almost from the day of her birth. Her features were small, her complexion was exquisitely fair, her eyes were dark blue, and sparkling with intelligence, and her head, before she was half a year old, was adorned with the most abundant ringlets of the richest auburn hair.

"When this lovely little creature was about six weeks old, the day of her christening was appointed; and my

self-love was not a little wounded, at that time, by a request from Mr. Selwyn, made with some hesitation, that she might be called Lucy. 'I think, my Caroline,' said he, with some perturbation of manner, 'that she will be like our Lucy.'

"'Do as you please,' I replied, very coolly, 'name her what you will.'

"'You have no objection, then?' he said, looking earnestly at me.

"'None at all,' I answered, endeavouring to suppress my feelings; but adding, at the same time, 'no one will accuse you of inconstancy. It appears that death itself cannot disunite some characters.'

"'And why should it?' he answered, with emotion. 'Why should death eradicate our love for those with whom we hope to spend a blessed eternity?'

"Mr. Selwyn was at that moment called away, which occurrence was well for me, as, otherwise, I should probably have occasioned one of those scenes with which those who are powerfully actuated by self-love sometimes diversify the ordinary routine of domestic life. As I, however, saw no more of Mr. Selwyn till the hour of the christening arrived, the little girl received the name of Lucy without further question.

"And now, with a husband such as Henry Selwyn, with whose character my reader can now be no stranger, and a child such as Lucy, whose budding excellencies rendered her from day to day increasingly fit to be regarded as *a mother's joy*, it might be concluded that I was one of the happiest of women: and so indeed I was when I calmly sat down to the reasonable consideration of all my blessings; nevertheless, in the midst of all these blessings, I was in a state of constant uneasiness and agitation.

"After some months, I got tired of my school of industry, and allowed it gradually to fall into the hands of hireling teachers, while, however, I still desired to be considered as its manager. Thus I laid aside this toy, and began to play with another, which was the establishment of female clubs, which met every week, and at which we talked, and subscribed, and borrowed and lent books: for I do not distinctly recollect whether any thing else was done, excepting that some took snuff, and others

groaned, whenever funerals or weddings were spoken of. As, at Christmas, however, I regularly gave a very handsome dinner to my old women, and as I provided a tea-drinking for them at Midsummer, I was excessively popular with them, and was therefore greatly offended when I heard that Mrs. Delaney had set up an adult school at her end of the town, and that she not only made her hours correspond with mine, but had actually drawn away some of my partisans. I grew excessively angry on becoming acquainted with this hostile conduct, and I allowed my anger so warmly to betray itself before the members of my club, that all that I said on the occasion was repeated to Mrs. Delaney, whose displeasure was, no doubt, greatly inflamed by the disclosure: in consequence of which, on the next day, her husband came to complain to mine of the manner in which I had spoken of her.

"On this occasion, my husband offended me very greatly; for, giving his hand to Dr. Delaney, he declared his determination of never quarrelling with him, advising him to make up his mind, as he himself had done, to leave their wives to themselves, and assuring him that there could be no question but that much had been added to what I had unguardedly said.

"The old doctor, who was a good-natured man, took Mr. Selwyn's offered hand with much cordiality, and promised him that in future he would leave the ladies to fight their own battles.

"As I was in an adjoining room at the time that this conversation took place, I was violently agitated with shame and displeasure; and when I next met Mr. Selwyn alone, I gave utterance to my anger in a manner which I had never before indulged in his presence.

"He tried to soothe me: but I would not be soothed, telling him, that he had spoken of me, and of my sex in general, with contempt, and that in the presence of a man whom I hated and despised.

"To all this he made but little answer; only telling me, that he had resolved never to espouse my quarrels, and expressing his wish that I would rather confine myself to my hemming, than engage in undertakings abroad which I had not temper to manage: and, thus speaking, he left the room.

"In this way, and by the frequent repetition of such

scenes, and various other proofs of my selfishness, I gradually chilled the affections of this best of husbands, and thus prepared my own punishment.

"In the mean time, as Mr. Selwyn's affection to me evidently became cooler, his love for his little daughter grew increasingly fervent. As months glided away, she became more lovely, and the likeness to her lamented namesake was increasingly striking. *Ah, my baby! ah, my Lucy!* how happy might I not have been when I possessed thee and thy father! Thy beloved father was still spared to me for a while; and still do I behold thee, in fancy's eye, sitting on thy father's knee in his study, where he often retained thee with him for hours, with thy soft and beautiful deep-blue eyes raised towards thy parent's face, and thy sweet small mouth and pouting lip embellished with a thousand dimples. O what a tender friendship subsisted between this father and his infant daughter! Oh, miserable wife and mother that I am, my self-love has indeed met with its deserved punishment!

"I have now, I think, furnished my reader with sufficiently numerous and varied evidences of my selfishness, and I shall, therefore, now proceed to the last topics of my unhappy story which are worth recording.

"A year and half had rolled along since the birth of Lucy, and the little fair one was now able to trot about the garden with her father, and sit by him, and take her meals with him, and she was, therefore, in fact, his constant companion when he was at home. Often have I heard him, on his entering the house from the street or garden, call aloud for his Lucy, when she would answer him, in lisping accents, from her nursery: even when he was studying, she would be contentedly sitting by him on the sofa, or artlessly playing on the carpet at his feet. She was a child of an uncommonly mild and tender disposition, and, when hastily addressed, she would often appear terrified and tremble: her eyes would then fill with tears, and her coral lip would quiver, while a pink and beautiful glow would entirely suffuse her face and neck. But no rough or hasty word was ever spoken to this dear child by her amiable father, and often have I seen her sleeping on his bosom as he sat engaged with his book.

"While this tender friendship was continually growing between the father and daughter, my mind was occupied by other matters. Though my husband would not vindicate me in my dispute with Mrs. Delaney, I was not backward in asserting what I deemed my own rights, and in maintaining, that I considered myself much injured in the affair of the club and the adult school. I told my story; Mrs. Delaney told hers: the old doctor laughed at us both; and my husband appeared never to take any interest whatever in the subject, though he was far from being careless respecting the promotion of my religious undertakings in general.

"At this time, that is, when my daughter Lucy was about a year and a half old, Dr. Delaney was attacked by a slight paralytic, which disabled him from attending to his public duty, in consequence of which, it was necessary for him to have a curate; and on this occasion Mrs. Delaney was heard to say, that she would move heaven and earth, but that she would get one who should empty Mr. Selwyn's church.

"When informed of this speech, I hastened, full of wrath, to repeat it to Mr. Selwyn, who heard the news without a change of countenance; and, to my great surprise, he remarked, that if the kingdom of Christ were thereby to be promoted, he should not care if every preacher in England were to draw more souls than himself.

"'What!' I said, 'and would you lose all your popularity?'

"'Caroline,' he replied, 'have you lived with me so long, and not discovered that I desire not to regard these things?'

"The curate was obtained; and, after his first appearance in the pulpit, I was told that he was young, handsome, wore a diamond ring, and had a delightful voice. During his first Sunday, our church was very empty, which I observed to Mr. Selwyn; but he took little notice of my remark. Another and another Sunday came, and the new minister continued to attract multitudes, while many of our pews continued void.

"Whenever we returned from church, I remarked this circumstance to Mr. Selwyn, repeating it in his presence on every possible occasion; but he still persevered in

turning a deaf ear to my suggestions, and he pursued his usual round of duties with unabated and unaltered diligence. At length, he put me out of all patience by inviting Mr. Montague (for such was the name of the new minister) to our house, and treating him with the utmost cordiality.

"'O, Caroline,' he replied, when I had spoken to him on this subject, 'how happy might we have been, could you but have been contented to give up for me and for yourself the admiration of the world, and the desire of popularity!—could you have submitted to seek to do good with a single eye to the glory of God, not seeking the praise of men, not caring for their reproaches, nor desiring to be deemed more praiseworthy than your neighbours! For, as your excellent grandmother used to say, the world is wide enough for us all, and heaven is wider still.'

"So saying, he dropped his face upon the head of his little girl, who was sitting on his lap, and I thought that he sighed. But though I thought so, I persisted, and said a great deal about his allowing every body to impose upon him, and take liberties with his name, adding, that such pusillanimous conduct might not only be injurious to his family, but also hurtful to the cause of religion. 'If you lose your popularity, Mr. Selwyn,' I remarked, 'you will lose your usefulness. A man, in order to do good in society, must possess influence; and in order to have influence, he must be known: but you neither desire influence nor popularity.'

"'And what then would you have me do?' said he, sighing again and more audibly.

"'Do?' I said: 'in the first place, you should not have suffered your wife to be insulted with impunity by such a low character as Letitia Delaney and her old husband; you should not have put up with the sneers and taunts of the doctor in all companies, as you have done; you should not have let every fool take the lead, as you do, in all public meetings.'

"'Nor let my wife find fault with me at home,' he added, cutting me short, with some quickness, but much good-humour. 'And now, my dear Caroline, let me have some tea; and, if you please, we will drop this subject.'

"On this, I burst into tears, and my husband left the room. I saw him, but a few minutes afterwards, carrying his child about the garden, and perhaps thinking how happy he should have been, had Lucy been her mother—at least, my selfish and jealous heart told me that these were his thoughts.

"It was now summer time, and the weather was extremely hot, and the town and neighbourhood were very full and very gay. Lord and Lady D—— were again among us, and our bishop, also, was come to confirm, and to spend some days in the town. While his Lordship was with us, he was invited to dinner at the nobleman's house where Lord and Lady D—— were visiting, and all the clergy in the town and neighbourhood, together with their families, were also asked to meet him.

"After the cloth was withdrawn, and the servants were gone out, our discourse turned upon religious subjects, and to the great exertions which were then being made in the kingdom for the promotion of religion. His Lordship then took occasion to compliment Mrs. Delaney on her activity in the schools; and, to my great amazement and high indignation, he addressed not a word to me on the subject; a circumstance which was attributable solely to his want of information, but which gave me extreme pain and mortification, such as I had no power of concealing from those who intimately knew me.

"From this visit I returned in such a state of violent mental agitation, that, as soon as I alighted from the carriage, I fell into a strong hysteric fit, shrieking with all my might, and refusing to hear reason from any one. When I became a little more calm, I reproached Mr. Selwyn for his tameness, and angrily asked him why he did not enter into an explanation with the bishop, and inform him that it was not Letitia Delaney, but his own wife, who had been the only active person in the schools.

"'Because,' said he, 'such an explanation could not, with propriety, have come from me.'

"'And why not?' I said.

"'Because,' he replied, 'it would have been opposed to every principle on which I have hitherto acted. Was it for vain glory that you established your school, Caroline? God forbid that I should have such a thought of

you. And i , on the contrary, you did it for the glory of God, then you ought not to be disturbed by any misapprehensions of his Lordship on the subject.'

"I had for some time past failed to received my husband's gentle rebukes in silence, and, on the contrary, I indulged in the habit of contending and disputing with him on every point; a habit into which all persons are prone to fall, who are lovers of self, and tenacious of their own opinions. I therefore suffered not this matter to rest, after having once expressed my sentiments with respect to it, but I returned to it again and again, always ending with this declaration—that I saw that we were losing our influence in the town, and that no doubt we should do so more and more, if Mr. Selwyn did not assert his dignity, come forward in society, and take the lead more decidedly on public occasions.

"The consequence of these frequent disputes was, that Henry withdrew himself increasingly from me; and, as he seemed resolved not to quarrel with me, his manner became cold, restrained, and distant.

"And now I draw near to that most dreadful part of my history, on which I cannot, even at present, after the lapse of years, reflect with a tranquil mind. The season, as I before remarked, was intensely hot, and a kind of intermitting fever had attacked many persons, and carried off several. I thought that my husband had appeared low for some days, that is, when I had thought about him at all; for, as usual, my mind had been in a ferment respecting some foolish report or other relative to myself; when, one day, I was summoned into Lucy's room, her nurse being alarmed to find her flushed and feverish when she went to take her up in the morning. I had observed her in the garden, in her father's arms, only on the preceding evening, as I was sitting talking, in my drawing-room-window, with one of my gossipping neighbours; I had seen him pluck a rose, and put it into her bosom; and I remembered that she had laid her head on his shoulder in a manner which led me to think that she was sleepy. All these occurrences rushed into my mind in a manner peculiarly affecting, as I stood by her bed, and beheld, with trembling apprehension, her flushed and fevered cheek, and other indications of severe illness. I sent immediately for medical assistance,

and dispatched another servant for my husband, who was, I knew, gone from home.

"Mr. Selwyn soon returned; but never shall I forget his evident agony when he saw the state of the child, though it was plain that he endeavoured to the utmost to appear composed.

"I have particularly enlarged in many parts of my narrative, but here I cannot. The scenes which followed this melancholy morning, though indelibly graven on my mind, would baffle all description. Suffice it to say, that my deep-rooted selfishness was itself eradicated by the poignancy of my own sorrows, and by the view of the unutterable, silent, and subdued distress of my husband. After seven days' illness, our child expired; and, had Mr. Selwyn then possessed a wife to whom he could have turned with comfort and satisfaction, he himself might perhaps have survived. But he had now caught the fever which had destroyed his child, and, being in a low state of spirits before the sickness of his beloved little one, he was unable to contend with the disease, and he therefore survived her only a few days.

"But before he took to his bed, while our little darling one was lying unburied, he never left her side; and one day, when I had stolen upon him unawares, I heard him thus address the remains of his infant: 'Ah, Lucy! child of my heart! no more do you meet your father's voice with those gentle glances and sparkling smiles which were wont to delight my happy heart! Ah, lovely one! sweet companion of many a solitary hour! I shall never more enjoy thy presence on earth, but I shall soon rejoin thee in a better world!'

"Then kissing her dimpled hand, and having fallen on his knees, he presented before the throne of grace an address so solemn, so full of hope and confidence in redeeming love, so entirely free from all trust in self or in his own good works, so full of gratitude for that which had been done to secure his own and his child's salvation, that I was about to step forward and kneel by him, when I heard him proceed in a humble strain of supplication for me. His voice was low, but I could distinguish all that he said. He entreated for me an entire change of heart, as for one who was yet in the bondage of sin; he requested that my afflictions might be sanctified to

me; that I might sacrifice all my appetite for earthly glory and human praise; that I might be wholly emptied of self, humbled, and brought low, in order to my being finally exalted; that my motives might be purified, my labours blessed, my activity rightly directed, and the very thoughts of my heart sanctified. Then suddenly looking on his child, and breaking out into fresh agonies, 'O my Father, my Father,' he said, 'bless, bless the mother of my Lucy!'

"So saying, his head again sunk on the bed; and I hastened away, not to make a display, as on many former occasions, of false and affected feelings, but to conceal my deep and genuine sorrow.

"My beloved husband survived his child only fifteen days; and he was, by his own especial desire, buried in the same grave with her. And thus the solemn tomb closed over all that was dear to me on earth: and from that time I think I may presume to date the change of heart whereby I received, as it were, a train of feelings entirely new, which rendered me as unlike what I previously had been, as if I had undergone another birth.

"After my husband's death, I lay for a long time as it were stunned by the blow, stupified, and scarcely capable of appreciating my dreadful loss. But with returning reason I felt so bitter a sense of the sins of my past life, that I was made to abhor and loathe myself as the vilest of vile creatures; and to see, that, during my whole life, I had been under the dominion of the most cruel and selfish passions. My envy of my lovely cousin, my neglect of her during my grandmother's illness, my violent rancour against Letitia, my desire of human praise, my want of fidelity in those things committed to my charge, my eye-service, my jealousy, my tormenting temper to my beloved husband, who was now no more, my frequent neglects of my child, all, all now rose before me, and I was made to see with detestation, that love of self, which had precluded my rightly discharging a single relative duty. I was made to see, that he who would love his neighbour, must first begin by moderating his self-love, or rather by seeking help from him who alone is able to dissolve the heart of stone, and to impart a heart of flesh in its stead. In short, all my strong holds of self-love and self-righteousness were overthrown, and I was made

to see that self-love is the natural tyrant of the heart, that it had hitherto reigned in my heart, to the exclusion of all that was truly good; and that the work of grace never advances while this tyrant retains its undiminished influence.

"Twenty years are now passed since Lucy and her beloved father have been in glory; and during that period I have been a mourner, not only in outward appearance, but also in heart. My retreat has for some years past been in the house of a respectable farmer, who married the little orphan girl, who had been the protegée of my dear husband, and who was well educated and endowed by him. In her I have found a daughter and a friend; and in Mrs. Stephens, whose family are now all dispersed, I possess an affectionate neighbour, in whose spiritual welfare I have a lively interest. I have been justly condemned to many melancholy hours. Nevertheless, I have found much peace since my mind has been reconciled to the loss of my beloved ones; but my peace has not been of this world.

"And now, having concluded the painful task which I had undertaken, I trust that my example may prove a warning to others, and that my youthful reader may be led, by my narrative, to discover that it is possible to give up the gay world, and what are called its pleasures, without any real relinquishment of pride and selfishness; and also that my example and my history, so full of sorrow, is an indubitable proof that where selfishness remains unsubdued, it is impossible that we can rightly fulfil our duty towards our neighbours, even in the most inadequate degree; for the social duties are allowed, even by the heathen, to consist in a renunciation of self for the good of others; and certain it is, that where self remains in force, whatever profession of religion may be made, there can be, really, no true conversion, or change of heart. The finest example which can be conceived of the entire absence of selfishness, is in Christ our blessed Saviour; and the more we contemplate his character, the more ought we to deplore our own extreme hardness, selfishness, and cruelty, and to lie humbled and subdued under the conviction.

"But now, inasmuch as it appears that it will not long be permitted me to remain separated from my husband

and my child, since severe disease is making deep, though hitherto silent inroads on my constitution, I conclude my narrative, humbly entreating you, my young reader, as you value your present and eternal happiness, to beware of self-indulgence, and remembering the golden rule, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, learn to deny thyself, in order that thou mayest have wherewith to comfort thy brother."

The lady of the manor having finished her story, which had occupied more of the evening than she had expected, called her young people to prayer without loss of time.

*A Prayer for that State of Mind which may enable us to feel and act towards our Fellow-Creatures with the Sincerity of perfect Christian Charity.*

"O ALMIGHTY FATHER, who alone art acquainted with the windings and deep intricacies of the human heart, impress us with a due sense of our extreme depravity; make us to know and feel that all which proceeds from self alone, every desire and impulse, every thought and motive of action which originates in the unrenewed heart, is utterly vile, corrupt, and abominable; and give us grace, O blessed Lord God, to regulate the inclinations of our own wills with reverence and holy fear; teach us to loathe the workings and suggestions of our unsanctified natural affections, and enable us to submit ourselves entirely, and on all occasions, to the guidance of thy Holy Spirit. Set us at liberty, O righteous Lord God, from the desires of the flesh, which work all manner of abominations. Help us to dethrone the idol self, and to set up thine image in its stead. Let all self-seeking be held in abhorrence by thy servants. Grant that our charity towards our fellow-creatures, and especially towards those with whom we are familiarly associated, may be ardent and Christian-like. Teach us to rejoice with those that do rejoice, and weep with those that mourn. Enable us, through all the diversified scenes of this life, to interest ourselves only about the glory of God, and the real good of our neighbours. Enable us, by faith and heavenly wisdom, to discern our own ad-

vantage in the promotion of thy glory, and in the extension of thy kingdom on earth. Teach us to cast our cares on thee; and give us that singleness of eye, and sincerity of heart, whereby we may be enabled to walk stedfastly forward in the way of duty, keeping our hands clear from the gain of ungodliness, and our minds free from any desire of encroaching on the rights of others. Empty us, O blessed Lord God, of all proud and ambitious feelings, all desires of supplanting others, or of obtaining advantages over them. Teach us to glory in the excellencies of our brethren, and to rejoice in their prosperity; and grant, that, under the pressure of affliction, we may be humble and resigned, submissive to thy holy will, and prepared to await thy time of our deliverance, in patience, and hope, and firm faith, that all will work together for our good, through Him that loved us and died for our salvation.

"And now, O holy Father, we confess and bewail all the offences of our carriage during our past lives; we acknowledge and deplore the numberless envious, malicious, and cruel suggestions of our wicked hearts, and those various acts of eye-service wherewith we have mocked our God, and endeavoured to deceive our fellow-creatures: and we pray thee to grant, that we may never again be left to listen to the vile insinuations of our evil hearts, but that henceforward we may be wholly devoted to thy service, that thou, the Great and Mighty God, mayest in all things be glorified by us, through Jesus Christ.

"And now, O blessed Lord God, to thee be all honour and glory, at this time, and for evermore. Amen."

# CHAPTER XXV.

Second Conversation on our Duty towards our Neighbour.

## ON OUR DUTY TO INFERIORS.

"MY dear young people," said the lady of the manor, "when last we met, I entertained you with a narrative, by which I endeavoured to trace out and expose to you many of those intricate and hidden feelings, and springs of action, which too often embitter the comfort of our domestic circles, and poison the fountains of family love, causing the hearts of those who, in their infancy, have hung upon the same breasts to swell, in their advancing life, with rancour against each other, polluting every source of joy, and withering the innocent and natural delights of youth. It is my intention now to attempt to set before you a view of those feelings which too frequently mar our charity towards our inferiors; and, for this purpose, I shall read a short narrative to you, wherein that sweet spirit which suffereth long and is kind, is displayed in a simple and yet, I think, a very attractive form."

The lady of the manor then drew out a small manuscript, and the young ladies prepared to hearken with their usual complacency.

### THE NEW MILLENNIUM HALL; OR, THE HISTORY OF LAURA.

There is a book, now very scarce, called Millennium Hall, which gives an account of a society of ladies, who lived together, in a place of retirement, about the beginning of the last century, and who devoted their time to a variety of acts of charity and benevolence.

It happened, a few years ago, that a middle-aged lady, the sister of a baronet, a person possessing a handsome, independent fortune, was paying a visit in a country house, where, one rainy day, the scarce volume containing the history of the ladies of Millennium Hall was placed in her hands.

This lady, whom we shall call Mrs. Dorothea Oldfield, had, from the age of sixteen, entered with avidity into all the moderate pleasures of the world, and had sufficiently experienced their emptiness, although she had not yet been led to know where to seek for satisfaction more solid than they could afford. She was therefore precisely in that state of mind the most likely to be amused and persuaded by a book which described, apparently, an attainable Utopia, such as a system similar to that which obtained in Millennium Hall seemed to promise. The old lady was, therefore, resolved to have a Millennium Hall of her own; and, being wholly unacquainted with the doctrine of man's depravity, and with the existing necessity of a something more effectual than the common restraints of good manners, to preserve a number of people dwelling together in one house, in that kind of order and agreeable harmony which is described as having prevailed in Millennium Hall, she determined immediately to take the requisite steps towards forming an establishment which should resemble and even eclipse this pretended paradise itself.

And here it should be remarked, that few books do more injury than those foolish and irreligious works which abound in every circulating library, and in which books the Christian virtues are represented as existing in various characters and situations in society, altogether unassociated with Christian principles. In works of this kind, the more pure the morality that is inculcated, the greater is the deception and consequent danger, and the more likely they are to produce destructive effects; and this, in the same degree, and on the same principle, that Socinianism is more to be feared in the present state of society than the disgusting idolatries of the Hindoo.

On this account, it is to be feared that those writers, both male and female, who have, as it were, robbed Christianity of her high and perfect morals and holy principles to deck those very characters that deny her

doctrines, will eventually find that they have been guilty of conduct more offensive in the eye of God, because more hurtful to man, than that of Belshazzar, when he commanded to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem, that the king and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink thereout.

But, that I might not digress too far from my story, I remark, that Mrs. Oldfield was not at a loss to fix upon a suitable situation for her establishment. There was on her brother's estate, in one of the most beautiful counties of England, a spacious old mansion, which had been deserted for some years past by the heads of the family; and, as it happened at that time to be vacant, she found no difficulty in obtaining it on very moderate terms.

This mansion stood in a small park, where a variety of trees, of very ancient growth, disposed in groups and clusters over an exceedingly irregular surface, presented, within a small compass, a considerable variety of umbrageous glade and breezy lawn; a running stream, which traversed this piece of ground in various directions, and which assumed all the caprices of a classic stream, by rushing precipitately from the higher grounds, and meandering gently through those which were more level, added not a little to the charms of this place.

The house itself, which had stood during a century or more, was built of small brick, now grown brown or rusty by time. It was low, considering the number of stories, and three of its sides were facing a court, which was laid out with gravel walks and parterres of flowers. Behind the house there was an old-fashioned garden, inclosed by a high wall, and at each corner of the garden was a summer-house. The number of chambers in this ancient mansion offered the convenience of a variety of separate apartments, and a noble dining-room and drawing-room promised accommodation for a very large family.

But, not to dwell on too many particulars of little importance, suffice it to say, that Mrs. Dorothea Oldfield found little difficulty in persuading several young ladies, whose fortunes perhaps scarcely equalled their birth and pretensions, to join her little society, in which she failed not to give them the promise of their certainly

finding all those enjoyments with which her own warm imagination had flattered her.

Among the young ladies who had been persuaded by Mrs. Oldfield to take up their abode in her beautiful retreat just mentioned, were two who were distinguished above the rest by the agreeableness of their persons, and, we may add, also, by their accomplishments. They were both descended from very respectable families, though in nowise related to each other. The name of one of these was Belinda, and the name of the other Laura. Belinda was one of those characters, specimens of which are to be found in every society, characters that cannot rest contented in any situation until they have formed to themselves a number of partisans who continually follow their steps and applaud their actions; while, on the other hand, Laura was of a modest and retiring carriage.

It was the rule of the house, that the young ladies should occupy the mornings in their own apartments, and meet together at dinner, and, if they pleased, also spend their evenings together.

On those occasions when the members of the family were met, Belinda seldom failed to take the lead in the conversation. Before she had been a month in the house, she had made every individual in it acquainted with her whole pedigree; and no one could relate any fact or piece of news, but it reminded her of some parallel case either in her own experience, or in that of some one of her connexions. As her countenance, however, was agreeable, her manner cheerful, and her address easy, and as polite as egotism would permit it to be, she was generally liked, and her company, in consequence, much sought after.

The society in this New Millennium Hall had little notion of vital and experimental religion; but its members submitted, nevertheless, to all the exterior forms which our Church enjoins, and several little schemes of benevolence were already in agitation in this young society, when somewhat of a revolution was effected in the sentiments of the family by the death of the former minister of the parish, and the introduction of another. The old minister had been a person from whom little was to be learned; but his successor, whom we shall

call Francis Woodfield, was a young man who knew the truth and preached it consistently, though he failed in practice, not altogether in points of strict morality, but rather in that gravity and strict decorum becoming a minister of Christ.

It would have been well if he had visited but seldom in the house of Mrs. Oldfield, and then rather on distant than on more intimate terms. But the society of the hall afforded too many charms for a young man living in a solitary village, to permit him to resist its influence in his own proper strength; and he therefore tried to make himself believe that he could not employ his time more profitably than in endeavouring to convert the ladies of the hall. He therefore visited them continually, and religion was constantly made the subject of discourse over the tea-table.

Mr. Francis Woodfield, as I before said, understood his Bible; at least he possessed much head knowledge, and perhaps was not without the desire of living up to what he knew; but much, certainly, was wanting to his being what might be wished; otherwise, he would not have attempted to undertake so great a work as the conversion of many souls in a manner so light as that in which he presumed it might be effected, namely, in lively chitchat over a dish of tea.

Mr. Francis Woodfield's views of religion were, as I before said, not contrary to Scripture; it was not, therefore, to be supposed that these new doctrines should be received by the ladies of the hall without considerable opposition and animadversion. But as the young rector was a great favourite, the opposition was more tempered than it probably would have been, had an older or a rougher-faced man broached the same doctrines in their ears.

In cases of dispute, Belinda was in general the spokeswoman of the party, and shewed much liveliness and readiness in argument. After a decent time, however, the fair disputant commonly gave way, and professed herself convinced of the importance of each disputed point; and in a short time Mr. Woodfield flattered himself that the greater part of the sisterhood were in a way to be converted.

About this time, the society having lived together

nearly a year, during the summer months many of the young ladies went abroad to see their friends, and the family was, in a manner, broken up for some weeks.

When the party was re-assembled, it was found that several of the fair individuals had, during their separation, met with opportunities of hearing good preachers; but through the mismanagement of their first teacher, who had brought them on too rapidly, and led them to think that they were somewhat advanced Christians, when as yet they had probably not taken one step towards the way of salvation, they had been unable to derive real profit from what they heard; and, having been called to listen to sermons intended for converted persons, they had become puffed up by this strong meat, and were, therefore, almost in a worse case than before they had heard the word of salvation.

The individual who begins his Christian career in any other way than by humility and self-abasement, may go on fairly for a time; but let him be assured that he has deep waters to go through before he can attain the end of his course.

Thus the young party went smoothly on, supposing that they were in a fair way soon to reach Mount Zion. But, like Ignorance in the "Pilgrim's Progress," it is to be feared that many of them wanted their certificate; for, though they could talk well on most points of doctrine, yet they never felt the plague of their own hearts, and, of course, but imperfectly knew their need of the Saviour.

Of Belinda it might be said, that, as some fine ladies play with chemistry, botany, and even with deism and atheism, in order to render themselves singular, she became professedly pious upon the same false principle, and not only pious, but benevolent; and busied herself in establishing day-schools and various other institutions, in order, one would think, that she might have something to talk about, and appear conspicuous among her companions. And, in deducing this inference, we do not wrong her; because it was evident to every acute observer, that she felt no pleasure in any of these works of charity, unless she herself took the lead in them; neither did she rejoice at any thing which she had been enabled to do, because it was likely to conduce to the

glory of God, but simply because it had been brought about by her own successful exertions.

But now to refer to Laura, of whom we have not spoken for a long time. This diffident young person had listened with considerable attention to the conversation which had passed between Mr. Woodfield and Belinda, and she had constantly, in private, consulted her Bible, in order to convince herself that the arguments which Mr. Woodfield used were consonant with Scripture.

Laura's apartment was one of the most remote in that wing of the house which was almost entirely appropriated to the use of the young ladies, and her window opened upon a part of the garden much secluded from the rest by trees and shrubs, many of which were evergreens. She had an opportunity, therefore, of frequently sitting to read and meditate at the window, unobserved by any of her companions; and she was led, by divine grace, habitually to influence and animate her meditations by solemn and earnest addresses to her Maker. She began, as it were, to feel her way in the dark; but the Lord was leading her by a way that she knew not, and, ere she was aware, He set her feet in the road to Zion.

It is not our present purpose to enter into the particulars of Laura's conversion. Suffice it to say, that it was a gradual, silent, and unobtrusive work, wholly disregarded by those under whose eye it was passing, yet, nevertheless, it was effectual because it was of God.

Laura had always been a modest and retiring character; but she had possessed much natural pride; and perhaps it was even to this feeling that she at first owed the dignified reserve and decorum of her deportment; for where no better principle is found to exist, pride itself has not unfrequently kept females within the bounds of prudence: but, like all other false principles, its effects are but partial, and, in instances where it may seem to have a salutary influence over one part of the life of the individual who may possess it, it brings shame, disgrace, and contempt, upon that very character, amidst other circumstances.

But the first and immediate effect of religion upon Laura was, to make her humble; and her humility instantly diffused a softness and sweetness over her manners, which they did not before evince.

That person who has at once a clear view of his own depravity, and of what he consequently owes to his Saviour, will necessarily become humane and tender towards his fellow-creatures. Accordingly, Laura's religion speedily produced this effect, and she began silently but seriously to consider in what points she had hitherto failed in her duty towards her neighbours.

As I before remarked, she presently found occasion to reform her manner with respect to her equals, and especially towards Belinda. She felt that she had hitherto allowed herself in unwarrantable irritation, on account of the overbearing forwardness of this young lady, by which she attempted to make every one submit to her caprices, and left little room for others even to venture an opinion.

Laura was now made sensible that she had been guilty of as great an offence against Christianity, by her cold disdain of Belinda's conduct, as the young lady herself had committed by her over-forwardness. Laura, however, now lost no time in repairing this offence; availing herself of every opportunity of behaving with a marked politeness and attention towards Belinda, which politeness the other received with a smiling kind of condescension, of such a nature as, to a proud spirit, would have been less welcome than rudeness itself.

When Laura left Millennium Hall, at the same time with the rest of the young ladies, she went to visit a family, one of the sons of which, a young clergyman from the University of Cambridge, was decidedly pious, and withal, more discreet and watchful than is common even to religious young men to be.

Laura was much benefited by the conversation of this young man, and her eyes were thus opened on many subjects which she had not before considered, though she never had any private discourse with him. And after her return to the hall, she felt that she was not acting as a Christian, if, when she saw her companions in an error, she did not endeavour to set them right. Accordingly, she took occasion, one day, when she heard her young friends speaking with what she deemed too much confidence of the progress which they had made in the good way, to point out the necessity of deep humility as the groundwork of all true religion.

In reply to this, Belinda took her up warmly, but not in a way of contradiction: on the contrary, she told her that she wondered why she should take so much pains to prove what every person in the company knew so well, and always acted upon; and appealed to those who were present to witness her assertion. "Are you not all, my friends," said she, "thoroughly persuaded of the importance of humility in religion? and is not the whole of the Christian system exemplified by this one single truth, that *They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick:* and, if so, how can any one be accounted a Christian, unless he knows himself to be a sinner?"

Belinda then proceeded to give the company an account of several things within her own experience, which she thought bore upon the point in question; and she would fain have made it appear that John Bunyan himself had not suffered more from conviction of sin, and dread of being found to be a vessel fitted only for destruction, than she herself had done. Thus was Laura quieted on this occasion; and in a manner somewhat similar was she silenced on every other, when she endeavoured to give utterance to any of her ideas on religious subjects before any individual of the family. She therefore determined to leave them all to themselves, and to seek for objeets out of doors, on which to exercise her benevolence and love.

But, as the ground was pre-occupied near the hall and in the village, and as she, therefore, found that she could not exert herself in those quarters without continually coming in contact with some of her sisterhood, with whom, as I before said, her ideas did not assimilate, she resolved to go further abroad, in order to seek suitable objects for the exercise of her humanity. Neither was she long at a loss; there being, in the next parish, about a mile distant from the hall, a portion of what had once been a royal forest. The greater part of this forest had been cleared and cultivated; but the residue, which still remained a wood, was occupied by a few poor wood-cutters, well known, at least by report, in the neighbourhood, for their petty depredations and other scandalous habits.

As these poor creatures resided at a considerable distance from their parish church, they lived in the ha-

bitual neglect of divine service; and as their appointed pastor was not one of those shepherds who search the sheep and seek them out, (Ezek. xxxiv. 11,) they had hitherto been allowed to continue (though dwelling in the midst of one of the most enlightened countries in the world) in a state of the grossest heathen darkness.

Laura, therefore, conceived that this benighted spot of the country might afford her an ample field for many works of Christian charity; and she resolved, at least, to make the attempt to do these people some good: and although it required no little courage to introduce herself among these savages, (for such in fact they were,) yet she did not doubt that she should find means to render her visits to them acceptable. She accordingly made choice of a girl about fourteen years of age, the daughter of a cottager in the neighbourhood, to accompany her in her walks to the forest; and, with this little escort, she set forth on a fine morning in autumn, soon after the reassemblage of the party at the hall.

It was precisely at that period of the year when the leaves, having changed their colour, still continue to hang on the boughs which they had adorned through all the months of summer. A thick dew, which had been touched by frost, stood glistening on every blade of grass; and the more distant landscape was covered by a bright mist which gradually vanished as the sun arose higher in the heavens.

Laura was led by her youthful companion along a narrow and retired lane, for the distance of three quarters of a mile, till suddenly she was brought out upon a heath, over one narrow corner of which she saw the forest above mentioned. The cottages of which she was in quest appeared like so many thatched huts scattered among the trees; and as the ground upon which they stood was very irregular, they formed altogether a very picturesque, and to Laura, who beheld them with an eye of Christian love, a truly interesting scene.

As Laura had expected, she found but little difficulty in introducing herself among the woodmen and their families. She had furnished herself with several little presents for the wild and half-naked children, who were playing at the cottage doors; and through their means she found ready access to the hearts of their parents.

The time would fail me, were I to enter into the particulars of all which Laura did for these poor people. She established a little school among them, which she visited regularly two or three times a week. She provided warm petticoats and cloaks for two or three of the oldest women. She frequently collected one or two families together, and read the Scripture to them; for there were few among them who could read themselves. She called upon and prayed with the sick, and made clothes for the infants.

Laura had visited this little society in the forest for several weeks, and, as she supposed, had become acquainted with every family belonging to it, when, one day, happening to go to a cottage which was situated further in the wood than some others, she saw beyond it, a pool which lay in a kind of valley or dingle, and which was closely grown round with flags and other water-plants. Beyond this pool she distinguished an old cottage, half hid by the pool-dam, built with timber, painted black, and with white stucco, and altogether presenting a ruinous and forlorn appearance. Owing to the leaves having now fallen, this cottage had become visible from the other side of the pool; for, when the trees were in full leaf, it was entirely concealed from the view of a person so situated.

Laura expressed some surprise at the sight of this dwelling, and asked who lived in it; for she perceived, by the smoke which ascended among the leafless trees, that it was inhabited.

In reply to this question, she was informed that nobody lived in it but the widow and her lodger.

"And who," said Laura, "is the widow?"

In answer to this enquiry, a very disastrous story was unfolded to the ears of Laura.—"A few months ago, a farmer's servant, a parish girl, and, consequently, a poor, friendless creature, had married a young woodman, and retired with him to this cottage, where they had lived in great happiness, till, on one miserable day, he was brought home dead, killed by the fall of a tree. From that time," said the relater of this story, "the poor body has been almost crazed; and it is more the pity, as she expects, in a few months, to bring into the world a poor fatherless babe."

Here was a tale of woe indeed, which brought tears into the eyes of Laura, who immediately hastened to see if any comfort might haply be imparted to the unhappy creature.

According to the affecting tales often furnished by works of fancy, the weeping widow still looks beautiful, notwithstanding her weeds, and cleanly, though in a state of the utmost poverty and helplessness; but in real life, poverty and helplessness are naturally accompanied by want of cleanliness, and the furrows and swollen features produced by tears mar all the freshness and beauty of youth.

Thus, when Laura had traversed one side of the edge of the pool, and had descended by a narrow pathway, strewed with decayed leaves, round to the door of the cottage, which stood with its back to the pool, she was struck with the air of desolation and wretchedness of every kind which evidently pervaded the whole dwelling; and, as she put her hand upon the top of the half-door to open it, she shrunk back involuntarily, and was obliged to summon her Christian principles to her aid in order to prevail on herself to pursue an adventure which promised nothing, at first view, but circumstances of disgust and horror.

The house itself was so thoroughly ruinous, both within and without, that in many places the plaster had fallen from the wall, presenting the bare laths to the eye, and leaving chinks through which there was ready entrance for many a winter blast. The floor was of clay, and two or three mean and worn-out pieces of furniture bespoke the extreme poverty of the inhabitants of this wretched dwelling. A miserable looking old woman sat spinning in the wide chimney, and at the same time watching a pot, which was simmering over a few half-burnt sticks. But the object which most forcibly arrested the attention of Laura, was the wretched widow already mentioned. She was sitting at the foot of a crazy bedstead, which stood in one corner of the room. She appeared pale and even ghastly, her eyes stared wildly around, her ragged clothes scarcely covered her, and every thing about her person seemed to mark that she had ceased to take thought for any thing which might befal her, either good or bad. At her feet there lay a bundle of sticks, which she had been gathering in the wood, and which she had

thrown down, as if weary of her work, of herself, and of the whole world.

I shall not enter into every particular concerning the manner in which Laura introduced herself to this unhappy person. Suffice it to say, that her gentle carriage had sufficient influence, even during her first visit, to draw from the poor mourner a flood of tears, the first that she had shed for many days; and when Laura, after having given her a little present, promised to return and see her again, she expressed a desire that she would come very soon.

Laura's visit to the poor widow was soon and often repeated; and her attentions produced, undoubtedly, the most happy effect which could be desired: for though she could not excite her to take any interest in the things of this world, for which it was evident that she had lost all concern, nor induce her to the observance of more cleanly habits, although she supplied her with many comforts of clothes and linen, yet she was exceedingly successful in bringing her to the experimental knowledge of her Saviour. The soul of this poor widow became as the soul of a weaned child, and surely she behaved and quieted herself as a child that is weaned of its mother. (Psalm cxxxi. 2.) In her husband she seemed to have lost all that had reconciled her to a life of poverty and labour; and the circumstances of his death had given her a shock which proved too violent for her constitution, she probably never having been a strong woman.

When Laura first visited her, she seemed to have lost every object of affection on earth; and her ignorance was such, that she had scarcely even an idea of the Saviour. She looked forward to death as very near; for, from the time of her husband's fatal accident, she had invariably maintained the opinion that she should not survive the birth of her child: but she viewed the probable approach of her dissolution with that kind of stupid hopelessness which often characterizes persons in a dark and ignorant state.

But it pleased the Lord so greatly to bless the pious instructions of Laura to this poor and forlorn creature, that she acquired an exceedingly accurate knowledge of the Gospel dispensation with wonderful rapidity; and, as the term of her earthly existence fast waned away, her

love of the Saviour became more fervent, and her self-humiliation more sincere and earnest. But as she could not read herself, and as she was continually desirous to hear more and more of the holy Word of God, she became extremely importunate to Laura to come more frequently to see her and read to her; and as her house and her person were still, notwithstanding the care and the presents of this excellent young lady, in a state of disgusting disorder, it might certainly be deemed an act of severe self-denial for a young lady of her refined habits to spend, as she did, many hours in such a place and with such company. But the true Christian charity of Laura rendered her superior to all minor feelings; and, as she saw the poor widow's health gradually decline as the period of the birth of her child approached, she became increasingly attentive to her, and endeavoured to edify her with instructions that were more and more spiritual.

It is written, *He that watereth shall be watered also himself.* (Prov. xi. 25.) Accordingly, Laura, in endeavouring to bring forward this poor woman, made also a rapid advance, herself, in the divine course. But of this advance no one could be less sensible than she herself was; for, as her views of Gospel light grew increasingly clear, she became also more and more sensible of the depravity of her own heart, of her want of faith, and of the coldness of her love towards God: and thus, as the Sun of Righteousness shone more brightly into her heart, its dark corners and secret passages, together with all their abominations, became more and more conspicuous to her, and she saw, with increasing clearness, that nothing less than the incarnation and death of God himself could have saved her soul from hell; for sins great as her own, and transgressions infinite and countless as hers had been, required, she sensibly felt, an atonement of infinite value: and thus she was at length brought to the humbling conviction, that, had every individual of mankind, excepting herself, been faultless in their obedience, and wholly without sin, still, Christ must have died to have saved her only. Thus she was made sensible that she had been as guilty of the death of Christ, through her sins, as the wicked Jews were, who cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him;" and thus, having been led to consider the part that she had taken, as it were, in the death of Christ, she

began, also, to feel her peculiar interest in its glorious benefits: and thus, through faith, she was led to consider Christ as her own peculiar and invaluable Friend. Thus, gradually, the whole scheme of salvation was unfolded to her, and she was progressively enabled to see the Father, through the Son, displaying his everlasting love for his creatures, and in the Son the Spirit also revealed himself, till, at length, the entire outline of the mystery of redemption unfolded itself to her view, and her hope of salvation was rendered complete.

Whatever were the discoveries made to Laura on this subject, she endeavoured to impart them all to the poor widow; and she was surprised to find, that many things, to the attainment of which she had arrived by long and intense meditation only, were instantly comprehended and received by this poor creature, whose mind was, evidently, on every subject but that of religion, dark and feeble in the extreme.

Laura had seen no preparation made in the house for the reception of the expected infant, and she mentioned the subject to the mother. "Alas!" answered the poor woman, "when my husband was brought in dead to me, I well knew that I should never live to nurse and tend my child. But I have provided a square of flannel to wrap it in; and I know that, if it lives, it will certainly be taken care of."

"By whom?" said Laura, wishing to hear what she had to say.

"I have no kin," replied the poor woman, "and I never knew my parents; and there are none belonging to my poor husband living in this country. But I trust to you, dear Miss," added she, looking eagerly in Laura's face; "I know that you will take the babe, if God spares it, and nurse it for God."

Laura knew not what answer to make: she felt the awfulness and responsibility of such a charge, and she hardly had an idea how she should be able to fulfil it. But still she could not bring herself to say that she would not undertake the trust; and she was, therefore, silent.

The poor widow laid her emaciated, discoloured, and unwashed hands on Laura's delicate arm, and, construing her silence and hesitation into an assent to her pro-

posal, she thanked her for her kindness, and said that she now should die in peace.

Laura procured for this poor creature the advice of a neighbouring medical man; but he gave her little hope of the mother's long surviving the birth of her child.

Laura had thought seriously of the request made to her by the widow, and she saw all the inconvenience which might attend her compliance with it. At first, the expence struck her: she had no house of her own in which to receive the child, and her income was limited. "If I take this child under my protection, it cannot," she considered, "cost me less than twenty or fifteen pounds a year; for I must place it out to nurse, and I should certainly desire that it might be well brought up, and well taught in a humble way; and this cannot be done without money."

These reflections were made by the young lady as she sat in her own room. "Twenty pounds a year," she repeated, looking in her desk for her last half-year's account-book: for since Laura had become pious, she had been very exact in keeping her accounts: "Twenty pounds a year," she continued, talking to herself, "that is, ten pounds for half a year will be requisite for the child's use. I must, if I take this baby, save ten pounds every half-year, and from what can I save it?"

She now took a blank sheet of paper and her pen, and began to set down the articles in which she thought she might save, calculating according to her last half-year's expenditure. And first, she wrote down, Lace, twenty shillings; five shillings for ribbon; a ring, one pound; a lace veil, fifteen shillings; a row of beads, five shillings; copies for drawing, new music-books, &c. and a new publication, one pound. "All these things," said Laura, "I can do very well without; but still they all do not amount to the half of ten pounds." Laura continued to look on a little further, and she saw no article of expence which she could decently dispense with, till she came to the following entry, My journey to and from ——, eight pounds ten. At this article Laura demurred. "My journeys," she said, "if I were to deny myself the pleasure of journeys, that sacrifice would make up the money in the summer, and also assist to-

wards the next half-year. But I cannot wholly give up the idea of going out."

Here was another demur. "I found the opportunities, while I was out, so profitable to me," thought Laura, "to my soul, to my religious state; Mr. ——'s society is so very valuable, his conversation so pleasant, he is so agreeable, and his countenance so fine!"

Laura's conscience now smote her: she threw down her account-book, and falling on her knees, "O my Saviour, my Saviour!" she exclaimed, "assist me to overcome this temptation!"

Laura was assisted; for she rose up determined to adopt the poor widow's baby.

The moment that Laura had made up her mind on this subject, she became much more easy and happy than she had previously been; for she now had a very sweet and interesting object to engage her thoughts. And thus, having fully resolved to adopt this baby, she began, like a good mother, to provide for all its little wants, even before it was born.

"And who can tell how busy and happy she now was while converting her own fine old linen into little caps and shirts, and arranging them in a drawer in delicate order? And more than this, she took the precaution to engage the cottager before spoken of, and who herself had an infant nearly a year old, to nurse her little charge for her, in case its poor mother should die; and thus she arranged every thing with a solicitude and secrecy which did her great credit as a Christian; for she had not forgotten her Saviour's injunction, *Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.*

Laura was an orphan; she had no parents nor near connexions, and she was, therefore, at liberty to act, and to manage her little property, as she pleased. Young women who have friends and guardians, would do well always to consult them with respect to the acts of charity which they may meditate, and no doubt they would often find themselves benefited by the judicious and prudent advice of godly friends. But Laura had none to consult except her Bible and her God; and it pleased the Lord to inspire her with that wisdom which is superior to all earthly knowledge.

"Laura had occupied all her spare hours during more

than a month in making preparations for the child, which she might soon be called upon to adopt, when, one day, immediately after dinner, a little boy arrived from the forest to request Miss Laura to come immediately to see the poor widow, who, he said, was very ill, and called for her.

Laura promptly obeyed the summons, and, calling by the way at Mary Hill's cottage, in order to take up her usual companion, she renewed her agreement with her, that she should take the infant if required.

When Laura reached the widow's cottage, the scene which presented itself to her susceptible mind was truly distressing. The infant which she had prepared herself to adopt had been born about two hours, and was lying, wrapped up in a blanket, upon the lap of the old woman who lodged in the house with the widow, a poor, feeble, and decrepid old creature, whom a long course of sin and misery had accustomed to contemplate woe with a heart unmoved. Accordingly, she sat, holding the new-born infant on her paralytic and trembling knees, without either evincing or feeling any other sentiment than that of a kind of stupid wonder at what might be the end of all this, supposing that the worst which was apprehended should happen, namely, the death of the poor mother. The nurse and two neighbours were standing by the bed of the suffering widow, with looks which instantly conveyed the strongest apprehensions to the mind of Laura.

Laura, on entering the cottage, first cast a pitying glance towards the infant; then, approaching the mother's bed, she looked first at the dying woman, (for dying she indeed was,) and then at the persons standing around. "We have done all we can," whispered the nurse: "we are giving her the wine that you provided; but nothing can save her."

"Where is Miss Laura?" said the expiring woman, in a hollow voice.

Laura spoke, and took the hand of the poor widow: on which, she lifted up her dying eyes towards heaven, and said, "My Saviour, I thank thee that thou hast heard my prayer!" She then made an ineffectual effort to raise herself, and endeavoured also to speak, but she could not express herself clearly. Upon this, she be-

came agitated, and strove to make herself understood by signs. But these failing of their purpose, she again attempted to speak, and made Laura comprehend that she wished for her to take the infant in her arms.

Laura, though trembling, never having touched so young an infant before, took the baby from the lap of the old woman, and brought it to its mother's bed; on which, the dying parent expressed full satisfaction, and said, "Take it, take it; keep it; it is yours."

On hearing the words of this awful bequest, Laura stood for a moment unable to speak; for she felt the high importance of the charge, and her heart was sensibly touched by the many affecting circumstances of the infant's case. As her mind, however, had been previously made up on what was to be her conduct towards the child, she inclined herself forward towards the dying woman, and said, "I accept your bequest, and, God assisting me, I will be a mother to your baby."

The poor woman had barely strength to say, "I thank thee, O my God!" and from that moment she seemed lost to all earthly concerns.

While Laura stood beside the bed of the poor woman, several changes passed upon her. She soon became unable to swallow the wine which the nurse put to her mouth, and she was now breathing her last, when Laura was awakened, by the cries of the infant, to other and more pressing concerns than the hopeless task of watching by the bed of the dying. The child still continuing to cry, she opened the blanket to give it more air. It had been hastily dressed in the clothes which Laura had prepared for its reception. Laura gazed on it till a tear dropped from her eye on its little unformed and tender cheek. It was now in want of food, and, by a natural instinct, it had therefore conveyed its little sprawling hand to its mouth, and was sucking it greedily.

The last sigh of the mother, and the words of the nurse, who, as she closed the mouth of the corpse, exclaimed, "Ah, poor soul! thou art happy now! thou art with the dear Saviour on whom thou calledst so earnestly all the live-long night in thy trouble!" just reached the ear of Laura, as she again cautiously covered up the babe.

"Poor creature!" said Laura; "and did she call on

her Saviour in her trouble? She is then happy: for *the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.*" (Psalm cxlv. 18, 19.)

Laura then, still holding the babe in her arms, cast a farewell glance at the poor corpse, and, as if it could hear her, she repeated her assurance that she would never forsake the babe; and then, pathetically bidding the lifeless body a long adieu in the name of the infant, she wrapped her shawl around the baby, and walked out of the cottage, followed by her little attendant.

The baby was hungry, and Laura was anxious to put it in the arms of the nurse before the evening set in; and as the little thing was so exceedingly young and tender, she carried it herself, and could not think of intrusting it to the charge of her little handmaid.

The road along which Laura had to go, in order to convey the baby to the poor woman who was to nurse it, was very unfrequented. Laura had hitherto never met any one in it but poor working people. She therefore now concluded that she should pass unobserved, as on former occasions. But herein she was mistaken; for she had scarcely entered that part of the lane which ran under the park before mentioned, when she saw Belinda coming towards her, with three or four of her young companions, accompanied by the young clergyman of whom mention has been already so often made.

The first feeling of Laura was that of shame at being thus discovered in such a situation, and she made a motion to consign the infant to the arms of her little companion; but, as she opened the flannel to see whether all were well before she surrendered it, strong emotions of love and pity again swelled her heart, and a something which she could not define rose up to her throat, and produced a slight sensation of suffocation. The little helpless one had opened its eyes while under the shade of the shawl; but when that was removed, it closed them, as unable to bear the light, and presented such a picture of utter defencelessness and imbecility, that Laura drew it again closer to her bosom, and said within herself, "No, I will not part with you, my poor infant, but to place you in the arms of one who is better able to

administer to your wants than I am." Her mind then reverted to the poor pale corpse that she had just left; and she was thus prepared, as she trusted, with some confidence, to meet her companions. Nevertheless, as they drew near, she felt her cheeks begin to glow, and this glow was, doubtless, not a little increased, when Belinda, who was leaning on the arm of Mr. Woodfield, called to her while still at some distance, saying, "Why, my dear Laura, where do you come from? and what can you possibly have got there wrapped so carefully under your shawl?"

"I will explain this to you another time," replied Laura, affecting an ease which she did not feel, and attempting to pass onward.

But Belinda and her companions took sufficient care that she should not escape before they had satisfied their curiosity; for they all gathered themselves close round her, and so entirely intercepted her way, that it was impossible for her to advance.

Laura was now compelled to listen to all the enquiries and remarks of her companions, who, by slightly raising the shawl, had satisfied themselves that she was actually carrying an infant in her arms, as they had at first suspected. Laura, however, though she endeavoured to appear undisturbed, was much vexed at being thus delayed; and, finding that her inquisitive young companions would not otherwise be satisfied, she promised that she would explain every thing to them when they met at supper, if they would now let her go without further molestation: and thus they permitted her to proceed. Before, however, she was quite clear of them, she heard Belinda say to Mr. Woodfield, "That Laura is a dear good girl; but she has such odd ways, that one does not know what to make of them."

Laura was a little disconcerted by this remark: but she soon forgot this and every other selfish feeling, in the joy that she experienced when the kind cottager received the little baby into her bosom, and administered to her that nourishment which new-born infants so eagerly desire, and which thus furnishes an emblem of the pure doctrines of the Gospel, which the regenerate soul receives with such ardent appetite and sincere relish.

Laura had now leisure to contemplate her little adopted

charge. She rejoiced much that it was a girl, and that it gave the promise of health and strength: and no tender mother could have been more lavish in assurances of her rendering ample satisfaction to the nurse, if she succeeded in rearing the child, than Laura was to Mrs. Hill.

Laura stayed to see the baby well fed, and laid, in a sweet sleep, in a large wicker cradle, which had enshrined all the cottage children in succession, to the number of seven, before she thought of returning to the hall.

The party were just assembling for supper, when Laura, full of the important events of the evening, and expecting that she should be called upon for an explanation of all that had befallen her, entered the supper-room. But, instead of this explanation being required, her appearance was scarcely observed by any one, and when she sat down, not a single question was put to her.

The cause of this apparent unconcern about Laura's adventure was, that her young friends had already made themselves acquainted with all that they wished to know, and they were at this time engaged in discussing sundry proposals for a female club, of which Mrs. Oldfield was to be lady patroness, and Belinda president.

During the greater part of the time allotted for supper, Belinda warmly held forth in recommendation of this club, which, she said, if arranged according to the plan that she advised, would extend its benign influence to the removal of every distress, which money could relieve, in the parish. In corroboration of this assertion, she produced a printed volume, containing an account of an establishment of this nature which had been instituted somewhere else, and representing the astonishingly good effects which it had produced. And, after supper, she called for pen, ink, and paper, and insisted, that Mr. Woodfield should lose no time in writing down the resolutions of the company on the subject.

While the young gentleman was thus occupied, one of the party proposed an amendment of some of the rules, and this introduced new discussions; during which, the secretary sat, with his pen in his hand, listening for the decisions.

In the mean time, Laura, having ascertained that her opinion was not likely to be asked, had, in imagination, wandered away from the present company to the orphan

baby, who she hoped was sleeping in the arms of its nurse, and her thoughts led her, still further, to the cottage on the brink of the pool where the corpse of the poor mother lay, perhaps at that moment deserted and forgotten by all the world. From this mournful scene, her mind, by a natural connexion, began to mount, on the wings of faith, to the Saviour, the hope of the pious dying, and the joy of the holy dead: and she was endeavouring to picture to herself the happiness of the redeemed spirit, set free from this mortal body and admitted into the glorious presence of the Lord, when, suddenly, she was recalled from this train of interesting reflection by Belinda, who, addressing her in a voice of much self-importance, said, as if in connexion with something which had gone before, "And if our plans succeed—and they will be sure to do so, if the excellent prospectus which I have had the pleasure of laying before the company is adhered to—we shall very soon be able to relieve you, my dear Laura, from the charge you have so laudably taken upon yourself; and, at any rate, we shall not, on any account, allow the whole burden to lie upon you. I must insist upon being allowed the pleasure of assisting you; and I am sure that there is not one in the present company who will not put in her claim for the same privilege."

Laura thanked her young friends, and was about to embrace that opportunity of explaining how the infant came into her hands, an explanation which she considered due to the company in general, and to Mrs. Oldfield in particular; but before she had made up her mind how to begin her statement, Belinda had diverged from the point, and had commenced a story, in which she gave an account of having been present at a death-bed scene, somewhat similar to that of the poor widow, and then she entered into an explicit description of her own acute feelings on the occasion.

Laura now perceived, by the connexion between Belinda's story and the death which she herself had witnessed that evening, that the greater part, if not the whole, of her adventures were already known to the company, but by what means they had become so, she knew not. This circumstance, however, accounted for the apparent want of curiosity which she had wondered at in her young friends. She therefore concluded that she

might now be spared all further explanations; and, as the discussions on the subject of the club continued to be carried on with great warmth, she contrived to withdraw to her repose.

You may rest fully assured that Laura did not forget her baby that evening in her prayers; and the next morning, by daybreak, she was risen, and had made up a small bundle of clothes to carry to the little orphan.

Her heart beat when she drew near the cottage-door, fearing that she might not find the little tender creature alive; but, on her entering, its nurse gave her an excellent account of its night's rest, and introduced Laura into her little chamber, in order that she might see it still asleep in the warm corner in which Mrs. Hill had left it.

There are some moments of life, in which the believer has a kind of foretaste of almost heavenly joy. Laura had a perception of this peculiar delight during the whole of the time which was employed in her walk back from the cottage to the hall, after she had seen her baby lying so sweetly asleep. Many exceedingly transporting reflections were vouchsafed to her during these moments; and she was favoured with a clear and a most reviving manifestation of the love of the Saviour to his sinful and distressed creatures, and especially of his goodness towards the poor widow and her orphan baby, in providing the one with the means of becoming wise unto salvation, and the other with every supply requisite for her present wants.

When Laura met her young friends at breakfast, she enquired whether any thing had been settled concerning the club, but she was put off with a very vague reply.

Belinda was writing at a side-table, from which she arose in a few minutes, to communicate her ideas. "I have been thinking," said she, "that it would have a most beautiful and elegant effect, Mrs. Oldfield, if we were all to wear a kind of uniform. For instance, if we all wore chip hats, decorated with white satin, and mantles trimmed with the same."

This idea, on which Belinda enlarged considerably, was received with great eclat by the company at large. Laura, however, looked grave, and even ventured to say, that if money were spent on things of this kind, their charitable plans must be greatly abridged.

Belinda and several others of her companions had much to say on this subject. "Benevolence," said she, "must not run into excess. The benefit of trade is to be considered, and if the higher orders cease to dress conformably with their station, there will be no indications of ranks, and all distinctions in society will be confused and lost."

Belinda then particularly cautioned Laura against excess in her charities, and against the appearance of oddness and peculiarity, which, she said, commonly proceeded from pride; and Mrs. Oldfield advised her seriously to deliberate, before she burdened herself with the charge of an infant, which she might hereafter find a very heavy and painful weight upon her.

Laura pleaded, that throughout Scripture there was a blessing pronounced upon those who befriended the fatherless and the widows; that she had done only what she considered herself called upon to do in common humanity; and that she trusted in God, if he saw that her motives were pure, that he would never give her occasion to repent of her conduct, but that, if he saw that there was aught either of pride or selfishness in her actions, he would do well to try them in the fire of affliction and persecution.

Mrs. Oldfield replied, that Miss Laura spoke like a young woman who did not know what persecution and afflictions were, and added, that the advice which she now gave her proceeded only from friendship. She informed her, that the parish to which the infant belonged might be compelled to keep it, and that, if Laura forsook it, it still would not be left to starve.

Laura replied, that she had been in the habit of spending greater sums on luxuries, trinkets, and trifles, than would supply the poor child in question with more than it could want, as she meant to bring it up in the condition to which it was born; and that she hoped that her kind friends would, therefore, not blame her for sparing from herself what she could so well do without.

Mrs. Oldfield still persisted in affirming, that, whatever she might choose now to do, she still did wrong in undertaking what might hereafter prove a burden to her.

Laura might have answered, "The present time only is all that a mortal being can say is actually at his com-

mand, and let him, therefore, take care to fill up each passing hour with such good works as may be in his power, leaving the rest to God;" and, further, she might have added, that the ability of the liberal man is generally enlarged in a degree equal to that of his faith, and that persons seldom find that their past charities lay them under subsequent burdens. Laura was, however, young, and, had she been able to adduce such arguments on her own side, she probably would have done as well to receive, as she did, the rebukes of her companions in humility and comparative silence. As it was, however, though she was not convinced by the arguments employed against her, yet she was silenced by them, and was, therefore, glad to embrace the first opportunity of escaping to her own room, from whence she soon afterwards proceeded to pay a second visit to her baby.

Time would fail, were I to attempt to bring before you an account of the various acts of kindness which Laura exercised towards her little adopted one, and how she delighted in discovering every step that the infant took towards improvement. I forbear to say how pleased she was when it first followed the light of a candle around the cottage with its eyes of dark blue, and how she exulted when those eyes were first lighted up with a smile which threw intelligence into every dimpled feature.

It was so ordered by Providence, that the infant was remarkably pleasing, and the delicate yet humble state of neatness in which Laura kept it added not a little to its infantine attractions. All, therefore, as far as the infant was concerned, was agreeable and encouraging; and Laura had hitherto found her self-denial more than repaid by the smiles of the little orphan, by which, in fact, she was so much attracted, that she insensibly became almost entirely absorbed by them, and she, therefore, began to lose all interest in every other charitable duty, excepting the visiting of the poor in the wood.

This spirit by degrees alienated her from her companions, and she thus acquired, without knowing it, a kind of contemptuous disregard of whatever they either proposed or actually performed in the way of doing good: for she could not but remark a circumstance which is common with respect to those who act in societies, that the good effects produced were not commensurate with

the trouble and bustle excited, and she was now become weary of all that parade, which brought forth so little fruit; and, consequently, she allowed herself to treat all their proposals with uniform and perfect indifference: and thus, whatever weight and influence she might possess in the society, was used by her to the hindrance of that which was right and useful rather than to its promotion.

And in this place we may well take occasion to remark, that in whatever degree selfishness operates in the conduct, it obstructs usefulness in an equal proportion. The truly humble Christian should always be ready to assist in every work of kindness and charity, without considering how far that work either may or may not conduce to his own particular credit or advancement. Blessed are they who seek the honour which cometh of God rather than that which cometh from man. There are, however, but few characters which are not biassed in their conduct towards their neighbours by selfishness, or by that which differs only from absolute selfishness in a very slight degree. When a selfish spirit, or a party spirit, which is only a particular modification of a selfish one, creeps into any work of benevolence, that work will either be grievously marred in its very appearance, or wholly deprived of its vitality and usefulness, even though its appearance may continue to be imposing; and it may often be remarked, that a selfish and narrow-minded character, though in the main desiring to act well, as often obstructs the good intentions of his neighbours as he promotes his own schemes, and thus, in the long run, he adds very little to the common stock of human happiness.

The various ways in which usefulness in general is obstructed by a selfish or party spirit cannot here be fully enumerated and explained; but we will, however, take occasion to point out some few of them.

There are many instances in which characters are, individually, so wedded to their own peculiar modes of doing good, that they either hinder or oppose the exertions of every other person whose operations of charity do not exactly coincide with their own; and thus much mischief is done, or, rather, much good is prevented. Could a well-meaning but selfish individual of this description only examine an accurate calculation of all the

good of which (humanly speaking) he had been the prevention by this narrow spirit, the awful total would perhaps drive him to despair.

When one minister or teacher has, through jealousy, weakened the influence of another, whom he knows to be upon the whole a godly man, though differing from him on some minor points, he is, in a certain sense, accountable for every soul which (humanly speaking) might have been benefited but for his interference.

When a minister or teacher aims to display his own eloquence, learning, or talent, rather than to promote the glory of God, his instructions fail of the only end to which they ought to lead, and he thus obstructs his usefulness in the most material point. He may, indeed, procure to himself admirers and followers, but he is awfully accountable for the souls which he leads, not to the worship of the living God, but to the service of a perishing idol.

Wherever, in minor points, an individual, through an overweening regard to self, neglects to add whatever degree of influence he may possess to any undertaking of his neighbour, the tendency of which is to promote the glory of God and the advantage of his fellow-creatures, he must consider himself accountable for all the good that he may have thus prevented: and it is scarcely credible how much injury is in this way done in society by well-meaning persons, and that through a spirit of selfishness or of party, of which the individual principally concerned is perhaps by no means aware; so true is it, that *The heart is deceitful above all things.* How wantonly often in common discourse do we cast our own individual influence into the scale which weighs against the projected benevolent designs of some friend or brother in Christ! thereby subjecting ourselves to a responsibility which we are not able to bear. For if I prevent my brother's usefulness in the least degree, I am bound to make up every tittle of that loss to my fellow-men; and the more important the point in which I have thus wantonly interfered, the more serious is my weight of responsibility. —But to return to my story.

It was not long before Belinda, who had all along regarded Laura as a kind of rival, or, at least, as one who chose to assert her own independence, discovered this

flaw in Laura's charity, and therefore took occasion to represent to her the error into which she had fallen; for Belinda was very keen-sighted and accurate in discerning the faults of others, though, in common with many, she was very blind to her own. "My dear Laura," she said, "you do a great deal of good, and are very kind, I know, and so forth, and the poor people in your wood are very much obliged to you. But we have nothing for which to thank you; for you take no pleasure in any of our plans and pursuits, and, indeed, by your grave and reserved manner, you throw cold water on all that we are doing."

This was very true, and Laura felt the rebuke to be just. She withdrew to her own apartment, and meditated upon it. For a time, her mind rose against conviction; and she buoyed herself up with the idea, that, though she was not discussing and planning acts of charity with her companions, she was, nevertheless, much better employed, and that she herself, singly, and without help, had done more than the whole body of them together had accomplished. But it pleased God, by the power of his Holy Spirit, after a while, to cast down these high thoughts, and to quicken her to a just sense of her fault; and now she clearly perceived that a degree of pride and self-complacency had insinuated themselves into her works of charity, and threatened presently utterly to destroy them.

On making this discovery, she, first, humbled herself before her God, and, next, went to seek Belinda, to whom she, at once, candidly acknowledged her error, and besought her forgiveness, promising, that, by the divine help, she would endeavour to reform her conduct in the point on which she had failed.

Belinda, who possessed a considerable degree of generosity of disposition, was touched by this expression of humility in Laura; and from that time a better understanding grew between these young ladies, although there still continued to be a material difference in their characters.

Laura thenceforward deemed it necessary to put a constraint upon herself, and to give more time to the society of her young companions, and to enter with a more lively interest into their works of benevolence; and though

there was much in what they did which vexed and fatigued her, yet she considered it a duty to bear with them, not only with patience, but with apparent pleasure, and she was thus enabled sometimes to influence their discussions to the advancement of the glory of God.

In order to spare time for her companions without abridging the hours usually devoted to her baby, and to other poor people, Laura was obliged to encroach on those periods which she had previously set apart for her own private amusement and improvement; and hence she was compelled to the observance of a continual course of self-denial, which, by the divine help, added to the strength and graciousness of her character.

In this way four years rolled along, without any considerable change having taken place in the affairs of the family at the hall, excepting that, from the time when Laura had changed her reserved and retiring habits for a more courteous and accommodating course of conduct, she had become increasingly loved in the society, and had acquired a gentle and persuasive influence, by which she had been enabled to do much good among the sisterhood.

But here I think it necessary to make some remarks on the term "accommodating," lest my youthful readers should mistake me, and suppose that I am giving countenance to the pernicious idea, that it is requisite, in order to do good, to be conformed to the world: which idea is directly contrary to the instruction of the apostle, who saith—*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.* (Rom. xii. 1, 2.)

We must, therefore, as Christians, be especially careful not to accommodate ourselves, in the least degree, to the sinful fashions of the world, and we are, as such, doubtless, required to make a much more entire renunciation of its pomps and vanities than most of us are inclined to admit. But there are certain points which rather affect the whims, tastes, and peculiar feelings of

our neighbour, than either his religion or morals, in which a Christian ought to exercise a considerable degree of forbearance and courtesy. But, owing to the pride and depravity of our nature, these are the points on which men, for the most part, contend with the strongest vehemence; and that for this reason, that the whims and humours of our neighbours are more apt to interfere and clash with our own, in our common intercourse with them, than are those qualities on which may hereafter depend either their everlasting joy or misery.

Having thus, I trust, sufficiently guarded the word "accommodating" from being wrested to an injurious purpose, I proceed.

At the end of the time above mentioned, the brother of Belinda, whom we shall call Eusebius, a young man of respectable character and fortune, came to see his sister, and to spend a few days with her. He was much pleased with Laura, and, after a suitable time, he made proposals of marriage to her.

It is difficult for a young woman to form a correct idea of the man who is paying his addresses to her. The time of courtship is a period during which the minds of both parties are under strong influence, and therefore a man may then seem to be what he is not, without actually intending to play the hypocrite. Hence appears both the wisdom and the safety of our referring the subject of marriage to the Lord, and, in fact, of our entirely committing this concern especially into the hands of Him by whom the thoughts of all hearts are *understood* even *afar off*.

In this respect, Laura was not wanting in this important duty. She prayed that she might be directed, and she was led to accept Eusebius, who was a character which, upon the whole, promised happiness in such a union with him, though he had by no means those clear and exalted views with which Laura was blessed.

When Laura was first deliberating about taking the widow's infant under her charge, she had, as I have already intimated, a short conflict in her mind concerning a young clergyman in the house where she had spent some months during the foregoing summer.—By her appropriating the money which she had usually allotted to her journeys to the use of the child, she had appa-

rently precluded every chance of seeing this young man again; and though she had continued for several months to remember him from time to time with some partiality, yet she had struggled against the feeling, and had also been led to see the kindness of Providence in having induced her so to do; for, before many months had elapsed, she received a letter from his sister, informing her that he was likely to enter speedily into the marriage state with a young lady to whom he had been attached for some years.

In this instance, Laura was thus made to feel the kindness and wisdom by which the Lord had diverted her thoughts and affections from that object, which would have proved only a source of mortification to her, to one in which she had hitherto tasted nothing but pure delight.

And here, if my reader is not already wearied with my digressions, let me proceed to point out the superior state of that young person whose affections are not engaged by self and self-gratification, to one whose object is self in any degree or under any modification. With what freedom does the one walk through all the numerous and varying scenes of life! with what dignity and ease of manner and carriage, compared to the other! and, finally, to what a variety of afflictions and mortifications is that young person exposed whose feelings are centered in self, in comparison with the individual who, forgetting self, seeks to serve her God with all her heart, and to love her neighbour as herself!

But this blessed state of mind can in no degree be attained but by those who seek deliverance from the bondage of their selfish feelings in the help and power of the Lord; according to the language of the Prophet Isaiah: *Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.* (Isaiah xl. 28, 29.)

Laura had, therefore, long ceased to think of the gentleman above alluded to, and she was, in consequence, at liberty to consider the merits of Eusebius; but before she accepted his hand, she made a point of informing

him of the charge that she had undertaken in the care of little Sally, and she also gently hinted, that she had determined to enter into no engagement whatever, unless she might be permitted to continue her protection of this poor orphan.

Eusebius was too much attached to Laura to deem this a consideration of any difficulty, and he therefore answered, in a lover-like manner, that her will would be a law to him for life, and that her pleasure would ever be his delight.

This, however, did not quite satisfy Laura, who possessed a sober mind, which looked to actions rather than to words, and she, therefore, insisted upon entering into particulars. "This infant," she said, "has hitherto cost me about fifteen pounds a year; and I should be sorry to place myself in any situation in which I could not continue to do as much for her as I have hitherto done. May I then trust that you will hereafter allow so much of my property to be devoted to this purpose?"

"Yes," replied Eusebius, "and, did you require it, twice and thrice as much."

"I hope," replied Laura, "that my moderation will prevent your ever having reason to repent of this indulgence."

Laura now being made easy on this head, and hoping that she should even be better able to serve the child effectually in a house of her own than if she continued single, accepted the proposal of Eusebius, and was married, and taken to his house, which was an agreeable and commodious habitation, situated about half a mile from a small market town, and standing in a pleasant garden.

Before she went from the hall, Laura gave a large Bible, and a liberal present in money, to each of the poor families in the forest. She also handsomely rewarded little Sally's nurse, and promised to make her an annual present, and she took little Sally with her in the carriage which conveyed her from the church.

It was settled that Belinda should make her brother a long visit on his marriage; an arrangement with which Laura would gladly have dispensed, as Belinda was of an overbearing spirit, and her profession was destitute of that simplicity which Laura considered as essential to the Christian character. Laura, however, had learned from no man, for she had no human teacher, but by the

Holy Spirit himself she had been taught to consider herself as little as possible in every arrangement; she therefore did not oppose the intended long visit, which ended in the final establishment of Belinda in her brother's house, and she took scarcely any notice of any little disagreeables which might proceed from the overbearing manner of Belinda, so long as her interference did not obstruct the interests of religion.

Laura made her instruction and management of Sally a matter of much prayer and reflection; she considered, that if she altogether left her with the servants, she would be liable to be ill used, and perhaps to learn much that was amiss. She therefore intrusted her to the care of one particular servant, and allotted her a little play-room, where she placed her bed, and a few shelves well stored with playthings; and she herself devoted to her all the time that she could spare when her husband was otherwise engaged. Thus she would often leave Belinda's side to go up to Sally's closet, and spend hours with her, teaching her, and dressing her doll, and telling her Scripture stories.

Sally was like all other children: she had the same feelings, arising from the same natural depravity. She fixed her affections on Laura in the same manner that she would have done on her own mother: she would run to meet her, jump on her lap, throw her arms round her neck, and lean her whole weight upon her; she would also have her fits of naughtiness, passion, sulking, untidiness, and greediness. All these things Laura had been prepared to expect; and she considered that it was her business, as the adopted mother of this infant, to direct and regulate, as much as she could, her affections and habits, and to lead her to God. But her own regard for the child, she considered, was not to be habitually influenced by its infantine faults, any more than the love of Christ for his people suffers variation from their wayward and inconstant frames. He is, therefore, truly styled, *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever;* (Heb. xiii. 8.) and they among the children of men who most nearly approach towards the heavenly pattern are the least liable to be influenced and to vary according to events and external circumstances.

Laura, having once obtained the leave of Eusebius for

the admission of little Sally into the family, never troubled him any further with her concerns, and every thing relative to the child passed on smoothly for some months. If Sally appeared before Eusebius, it was on proper occasions, and when she was neatly dressed, and directed how to behave. He was never teased with any little private difficulties concerning her; and Laura would often take occasion to thank him for the protection that he afforded the child, and for the kindness that he extended towards her. Thus all went on well, till Belinda, whose natural and indulged love of self occasioned that restlessness which selfishness always produces, began to pry into the management of little Sally; and, seeing Laura one day look pale, after having corrected the child for some misdemeanor, she began to admonish her sister-in-law on the subject. "My dear Laura," she said, "you devote too much of your time to that child; and I do not think that the behaviour of the child towards you is that which you have a right to expect: she is your inferior, and she therefore has no right to take those liberties with you of sitting on your lap, and putting her arms round your neck, which might be permitted in an equal. Yet this, I grant, might be borne, being only an excess of laudable feelings; but what can be said in extenuation of her fits of naughtiness and obstinacy? what return is this to you for all your kindness? What would have been her situation had you not taken pity on her? —what but a workhouse, or perhaps an early grave?"

Here Laura interrupted her sister, saying, "And pray, my dear Belinda, how would it be possible to make a child of little more than four years of age comprehend what she owes to me? Were she four times four, she could have but a very inadequate idea of these obligations; and perhaps she must wait, not only till she is a mother herself, but till she has opened her eyes upon a state of disembodied existence, before she can form an idea of what she owes to her heavenly Father, who has made use of me as a humble instrument to rescue her from the vice and misery of a workhouse; and I shall think nothing of it, even though she might never thank me till that time."

"Upon my word," said Belinda, "your views, my dear sister, are very singular."

"And wherefore?" asked Laura. "Let us judge only from what we see among children with respect to their natural parents; and then point out to me, if you can, any young people who are properly sensible of the duty and gratitude that they owe to those who gave them birth. And, to go a step higher, who of us has a proper sense of our duty to God, and of the gratitude which we owe to him?"

Belinda seemed to be staggered, for a moment, by this reasoning, and to have nothing to say. But presently she recovered herself, and added, "My dear Laura, your arguments do not bear precisely upon the subject in question, because they refer to the relative duties between parents and children; and I grant that mutual forbearance must be exercised in these relations. But, because parents must put up with their children's faults and infirmities, does it ensue, that you are to endure, in the same degree, the defects and perverseness of a little child whom you have taken in for pure charity? Think to what self-denial you have subjected yourself, in order to support this babe in ease and comfort for several years past, and how you still devote all your leisure time to this same object; and is it reasonable that you should continue so to do, without your having even the reward of seeing gratitude and a desire to please you in the object of all your care? It was but half an hour ago that I heard the child cry out with passion, because you compelled her to perform some little task."

"And you also saw me," replied Laura, "administering the rod to her, which presently put all to rights; and what, my dear sister, is remarkable in all this transaction? Should it please God to give me children of my own, I shall expect sometimes to have scenes of this kind to encounter again."

"But such obstinacy," said Belinda, "from an orphan, a child reared by charity; and such ingratitude towards the kind friend who has been more than a mother!"

"I repeat, my dear sister," said Laura, "that this child is utterly incapable of understanding what she owes me. And do we not know, that every child of Adam is born under the dominion of Satan, and must be expected, till grace has advanced its work, even to break out into strong irruptions of sin?"

Belinda still continued to assert that there was in Sally an unwarrantable degree of what was very wrong; and Laura, as soon as possible, made her escape from the debate into her own room, where a gentle flood of tears relieved her heart from its oppression.

As Laura aimed to avoid, as much as possible, all occasion of dispute with respect to Sally, and as, when her little ward required correction, she administered it as privately as she could, after the contest above mentioned, every thing concerning the child passed on very quietly, till the prospect presented itself that Laura would eventually become a mother herself. The hope was a pleasing one to all the family, and Laura took great delight in preparing for the little stranger.

She was one day thus employed when little Sally was playing by her side; and the child, seeing a small garment, and not knowing for whom it could be intended, very naturally asked if it were for herself.

"No, my dear," said Laura; "it is for a baby whom you are to love when it comes."

"Was not I a baby, Ma'am, when you took me first?" said Sally.

"Yes," said Laura, "a very little baby."

"And did you love me then, Ma'am?" asked the little girl.

"Very, very much," said Laura.

"And will you love me when the other baby comes?"

"Yes, my dear child," replied Laura: "why do you ask?"

"Because," replied Sally, "I heard somebody say, that when you have another baby you will not love me."

"Those were very wicked words," returned Laura, taking the child in her lap. "I always shall love you, my little Sally, as I have loved you from the time that you were first put into my arms."

The little child put her arms round Laura's neck, and kissed her, and then, being perfectly satisfied, went to play.

But Laura could not so easily forget this circumstance. "I see," she said to herself, "what the world expects of me: when I have a child of my own, it is concluded that I shall cease to love this orphan. And why is such an expectation entertained? Because such conduct is

in unison with the general experience of the depraved nature of man. Should not this be a warning to me to watch against my own weakness? and should it not lead me to prayer, that I may be strengthened to resist this temptation, and that I may be enabled, amidst all circumstances, to persevere in this work which I have undertaken?"

Laura then reflected on the various instances which had fallen under her own observation, of persons, who, having undertaken works of charity, and having gone on for a time with great warmth and zeal, had afterwards gradually grown weary in well-doing, and had apparently found reason to prove that it was become their duty now to desist from their good works. She, however, prayed that she might be endued with that charity which suffereth long and is kind; (1 Cor. xiii. 4;) and it will eventually appear that her prayer was heard.

Soon after this conversation, Belinda again proceeded to busy herself with the affairs of Sally, and that in the presence of her brother, a circumstance which much surprised Laura. This latter young lady endeavoured, however, to be upon her guard, and to answer calmly, though she was much vexed.

"It is a pity, my dear sister," said Belinda, "in your present state of health, that you should fatigue yourself so much with Sally as you do. You look pale; and I really think that it is owing to your confining yourself for so many hours every day in that little hole which Sally occupies."

Eusebius immediately took up his sister's words with evident alarm, and added, "Laura, my dear, I must insist upon it that you do not sacrifice your health to that child: she would do very well under the care of the housemaid."

"I promise you, my love," replied Laura, "that I will do no more for Sally than is quite agreeable and easy to me. So do not in the least disturb yourself on that head."

"You are fond of the child," rejoined Belinda, "and therefore do not know how much you are engaged with her every day, my dear sister."

Eusebius repeated his injunctions, that Laura should not fatigue herself; and there the matter rested for the present.

But Belinda again introduced the subject in the course of a few days, and again shortly after, till, in fact, she had excited a kind of soreness on the point in the mind of her brother; insomuch so, that when by chance he heard Sally's voice, whether in play or otherwise, he would utter some exclamation of displeasure, or send some angry message, desiring that the child might be kept out of his hearing, and this in the presence of Laura, who feared to interfere, lest it should make things still worse.

Now Belinda, after all, was not, upon the whole, an unfeeling woman. She entertained no dislike against the child, and she cherished a general wish to do good and to be pious. Bnt she was selfish: she regarded her own reputation rather than the glory of God; and she could not enter with cordiality and pleasure into any good work in which she had not a conspicuous part. She was not properly sensible of the finite nature of the capacity of man, and, consequently, not aware how little his mind is able to grasp at once, and she fancied that she could do every thing better than it was done by others. She was, therefore, constantly meddling with the concerns of those about her; and it is inconceivable what mischief is done by persons of this character.

When we are required to assist, in a subordinate way, in the promotion of the objects and undertakings of others, it is a very difficult attainment for us readily thus to co-operate, and it requires as much wisdom, and more self-denial, to forward the good works of others, than to originate and to apply plans for the beginning of doing good.

There are some children of a particularly quiet and manageable disposition, children that, when they are put into a room to play, will continue there from morning till night without being heard. But this was not Sally's character: she was a busy, enterprising little creature, constantly trying experiments, and as regularly doing mischief.

Many a time, since her marriage, had Laura concealed the little unlucky accidents which Sally had met with; and though she privately corrected her for her misdemeanors, she was careful in having them repaired unknown to any one. But when Laura was confined, many of these little misfortunes were brought to light; and

Laura, more than once after the birth of her baby, was affected even to tears by the cries of Sally, when Belinda was chastising her, and she felt that the utmost noise which Sally could have made in her play, would have disturbed her much less than the cries of distress of the poor orphan.

It is an old saying, that those persons who do not love children have no right to correct them; and Laura now sensibly felt that no one besides herself had a right to correct Sally. She, however, said nothing, but, as soon as she was again able to get about, she established her little Sally in the nursery with the nurse and the baby; and, as she herself spent many hours of each day in the nursery, she had an opportunity of seeing that justice was done to Sally.

It happened that the nurse employed by Laura was a woman of right principles, and correct judgment, and she satisfied her mistress in her conduct with respect to Sally, observing the judicious medium between indulgence and harshness.

It is not my present business to give a particular account of Laura's family management. Suffice it to say, that she was a good mother, and had a numerous family. She devoted much of her time to her children, who were at once her occupation and delight.

Sally, as she advanced in years, had her proper station appointed her in the nursery, where every thing was taught her by which she might be rendered a pious, well-informed, and useful woman, for that line of life in which she might probably be called to move: but while Laura endeavoured to prepare her for a humble state of life, she still treated her with all the affection and tenderness of an own child. Sally told all her little complaints freely and candidly to Laura. When oppressed by grief, she would run and weep in her bosom; and when pleased, she always looked for Laura to share her joys with her. Thus she grew up in the exercise of all those feelings which a child ought to cherish for a mother; and the influence which Laura, consequently, had with her was such as a parent possesses over a daughter.

In the mean time, Sally, by a happy concurrence of circumstances, was protected from the annoyance of Belinda's busy spirit; for Belinda's apartment was distant

from the nursery, which was Sally's habitual scene of action; and Eusebius seemed to have forgotten that such a person as Sally existed, excepting when he occasionally saw her; and this his apparent indifference about her arose not from any unkindness, but because his business lay in another line.

Thus the poor orphan at length attained her fifteenth year, at about which time Laura was taken so ill, that it was found necessary for her to leave home, and go to Bath for some months. As she was to be received in the house of a friend, it was impossible for her to take more than one child with her; and that child could not be Sally, because in this friend's house there was no place between the parlour and a kitchen, full perhaps of profligate servants, where this poor child might expect to find an accommodation. Laura was obliged, therefore, to leave this poor orphan, together with her other children, under the care of Belinda, who was to superintend the concerns of her sister-in-law's house during her absence.

The tender mother felt no further uneasiness on account of this separation from her own children than what was natural in her parting for the first time for several months from them. She knew that Belinda loved her little nephews and nieces, and that she would, at the same time that she corrected them, if they did wrong, treat them with all proper consideration, and that, in case of any misdemeanor, she would make every desirable allowance for them. But she dreaded lest Belinda's meddling spirit should be excited to the injury of Sally; for Belinda had, in her own estimation, a variety of notable sentiments and expressions concerning persons of inferior conditions; and though she exerted herself much in actual works of charity, she, nevertheless, was entirely destitute of that spirit which suffereth long.

Laura could find, however, no alternative. She must go, and she must leave Sally, whose tears and sobs, when she bade her farewell, did not a little add to her apprehensions. She did not, however, think it judicious even to hint to Belinda that she had her fears lest she might prove unkind to Sally; for, well knowing Belinda's high and independent spirit, she was apprehensive that such a hint might only excite in her a feeling still more unpropitious to the welfare of the orphan.

Thus Sally was left, and she soon felt the want of that solicitude which had hitherto preserved her, with all the tenderness of maternal love, from those rubs which unprotected youth must ever experience in the world at large.

Sally felt, from a kind of never-failing instinct, that the sentiments of Belinda towards her were very different from those of her dear dear mamma, as she always called Laura, when she dared, abridging the last letter on occasions when she thought that the less familiar term of Ma'am would be better received. She spent the first two days of Laura's absence in her little closet, in which her bed had stood from the time of her having first become an inmate in the house, creeping out only to get her meals at those times when she thought that she should be least observed. But, soon growing weary of this secluded life, and feeling the weight of three shillings, which Laura, on the eve of her departure, had put into her hand, an intolerable burden, she planned an excursion to the neighbouring town, in order to relieve herself of them, and silencing her conscience, which was not altogether easy on the occasion, by saying, "If my dear mamma was here, I am sure she would let me go, because once she did send me alone to the town," she put on the very best clothes that she had, and sallied forth in triumph. She reached the town in safety, and laid out half of her money in rose coloured ribands, and the other in playthings for the children. She was returning, delighted with what she had done, and had got nearly half way home when she met Belinda.

She was at that moment just thinking how happy the children would be as they received the playthings, when her joy met with a sudden check at the sight of Belinda.

She reddened violently, and, had it been in her power, would have run another way to hide herself, but this was impossible.

"And is that you, Sally?" said Belinda, "walking out at this distance from home and alone? And pray, whose permission did you ask?"

Sally was silent.

"You have been at the town?" said Belinda.

"Yes, Ma'am," replied the orphan.

"And pray, of whom did you ask leave?"

"I thought that my dear Ma'am would not have been angry if she had been here."

"But she is not here, and it is to me that you are now to apply," rejoined Belinda. "Return home immediately, and be assured, that if you are ever again guilty of a thing of this kind, I will make you sensible that you are not to take the liberties with me that you do with my sister. You trespass on her kindness, Sally, and always have done, and you never have had a proper sense of her goodness to you."

"Indeed, indeed," said Sally, bursting into tears, "I do love her, and I think that I could die to please her; and I know that I never shall be happy till I see her again."

This last expression offended Belinda, and she said, "Why should you suppose that you will not be happy while under my care, unless you are determined to go on as you have begun, in endeavouring to do every thing which you can think of to displease me?" Belinda then bade Sally instantly return home, while she slowly followed, planning sundry reformations in the management of the orphan, to be entered upon immediately.

While pondering these plans abounding with circumstances destructive to the comfort of Sally, Belinda met her brother, and without loss of time set before him an aggravated account of Sally's delinquency. She might have added, that she herself had allowed two whole days to pass since the departure of his wife, without once enquiring where Sally was, or how she was employed; and that the misdemeanor of the young creature might justly be attributed to her not having properly assumed the reins of her authority over her; but she withheld this important part of the story, and thus she made Sally's conduct appear to be an act of open rebellion, though it was really no more than a hasty and foolish measure.

There are certain points, on which men in general are usually very tender; they cannot bear to be troubled with the vexatious minutiæ of household affairs; nor, in fact, do these belong to their province; and when they happen to be disturbed by these trifles, they often indeed drive away the tormenting flies, but then it is with a blow which, like that of the bear in the fable, leaves the face of the person thus relieved all covered with blood. Eu-

sebius was evidently much displeased with Sally by Belinda's representation of her conduct, and he, therefore, expressed himself strongly against her in sweeping terms, as a young person who had no sense of gratitude and affection.

Sally had many faults; still, want of affection was no trait in her character: on the contrary, her feelings were warm; and for Laura and her children, and even for Eusebius, she cherished a regard which could not have been stronger had she actually been their own child.

The next day Belinda began to execute her scheme of reformation. She had always considered Laura as being too indulgent to Sally, and she therefore thought that she should be actually performing a laudable work by changing the plans of management with respect to her. Her first step, therefore, was to order Sally to take her meals in the kitchen, and to assume a larger share in the discharge of domestic duties. Laura had endeavoured to qualify Sally to get her bread by needle-work, and in many other ways to act as an upper servant; but Belinda insisted upon it that an inferior mode of servitude would be quite as good for her, and, with this view, she took immediate measures to fit her for this new way of life; and thus, by associating her with a style of company to which she was previously a stranger, and by inuring her hands to hard labour, she put her entirely out of the way in which Laura had educated her.

Amidst these altered circumstances, Sally became dissatisfied and restless. She often hurried through the tasks that were allotted to her, and then crept into the nursery to play with her old companions, or rather to weep with her friend the little Laura, who was an amiable child about five years younger than herself. But if fretting and weeping had been the only ill effects of Belinda's injudicious and unfeeling management, it would have been well: but unhappily young people of fifteen do not weep long in any circumstances amidst which pleasure offers itself in however coarse and undesirable a form.

The family establishment consisted of several servants, men as well as women; and though Laura, and even Belinda, endeavoured to select and regulate this family of servants according to the best Christian principles, it would, nevertheless, afford matter for great wonder, if,

in a kitchen containing seven persons, something was not now and then said and done which Laura would much have wished for her dear Sally neither to see nor hear.

Sally had acquired such a nice sense of delicacy, that she was at first shocked with the coarse jokes of the footman, and refused to take any part in them; but her delicacy having nothing to encourage and support it, soon gave way, and she, being a very lively girl, soon learned to joke with the other servants, and perhaps to be the first to throw the dregs of a jug of beer at the maids and then to run screaming away if they attempted to return the joke.

Belinda having now placed Sally in the situation in which she maintained that she ought always to have been brought up, turned her busy mind to other works of benevolence, as she called them, in which, however, it is to be hoped that she evinced the exercise of a better judgment.

We have no opportunity of tracing any other professed good works of Belinda; but if they were not better planned and performed than were her avowed kind intentions towards Sally, it may well be affirmed with respect to her nearly as it is said of the wicked, "The tender mercies of the selfish and meddling are cruel." For Belinda, in all that she did, aimed to make it appear that she was wiser and cleverer than other people, and in seeking to exalt herself she failed to consider the feelings of others, the consequences of which indifference were that she not unfrequently broke the bruised reed, and extinguished the smoking flax.—But to return to poor Sally.

Eusebius was more than once roused from the perusal of an interesting book while sitting in a retired parlour at the back of the house, by loud peals of laughter proceeding from the offices, which laughter was always traced to poor Sally, neither was she wronged when accused of beginning and leading the uproar which had disturbed the master. Belinda on these occasions always aggravated Sally's offences, and added to the general irritation by sharp and severe reproofs to the unhappy girl herself in the presence of the other servants.

And now poor Sally frequently consumed her time in weeping in private for her beloved mamma, as she fondly

called Laura in her moments of tender sorrow, in making resolutions of amendment and reformation, and in scenes of hard labour and idle mirth. She wondered why she could not abide by her determinations of behaving well as formerly; and she could not conceive how it was that religion had not the same influence over her that it once had; while she often summed up all her reasonings on this strange alteration in herself by saying, "When my dear, dear mamma was at home, things were not as they now are."

As it might well be expected, the conduct of Sally lowered her more and more in the estimation of her protectors, if the heads of the family who were at home now deserved that name; and the unpromising state of the poor young creature at length became so evident to Belinda, who thought of nothing less than taking any blame to herself on the occasion, that she proposed to Eusebius that Sally should be sent from the house, and placed to lodge with a woman in the neighbourhood who took in washing and ironing, "and there," said Belinda, "this young person will be in her proper place; and we may hope," added she, in a voice of compassion, "we may hope that she will then do better."

Eusebius rather started, however, at this proposal, on account of Laura, for he knew full well her affection for the girl, neither was he himself wholly without regard for her, and he was sensible how much his own children were attached to her: he therefore resisted the proposed measure for a while, but at length, on his seeing that Sally would infallibly be ruined if she continued where she was, he consented that she should be removed; although he expressed strong apprehension that his dear Laura would suffer much when she heard of the necessity that there was for such a removal; he also acknowledged himself greatly surprised at the sudden depravity of the young creature, and asked Belinda how it was possible to account for it. To which Belinda replied, that she had no doubt that her sister, out of false tenderness, had hitherto kept the faults of the poor girl from their knowledge; for on no other supposition could she account for her suddenly appearing to have deviated so very far from the course of rectitude. Whether Belinda was herself conscious that she had erred in the management of

this poor young girl, we know not, for she was strongly actuated by that self-love which blinds the eyes and hardens the heart: but this is certain, that she invariably had spoken but little to Eusebius of the various changes which she herself had made in the situation and employment of Sally; and she represented her as having herself forsaken the nursery and preferred the society of the kitchen.

When Sally was told that it was settled for her to leave the house of her hitherto kind protectors, the information seemed to rouse every feeling that was tender and amiable in her nature.

"Oh my mother! my adopted mother! my dear, dear Ma'am!" she exclaimed, "when will you come back? I have behaved ill, but I know you will forgive me—you will be sorry for me, and you will take me to your dear heart again."

This exclamation was uttered in the presence of Belinda, who represented to her, that, after her very bad behaviour, she must not expect the return of Laura's kindness.

Sally looked at her with an expression of countenance, which seemed to say that she was assured that nothing on earth could finally separate her kind protectress from her poor child, and the look was one which Belinda understood, for she reproved her sharply, and asked her, if she could deny her having behaved very ill during the absence of her mistress.

"I have behaved very ill, it is true, Ma'am," said Sally, "I never behaved so ill before; I do not know how it has happened: my heart I know is very bad, and I hope I shall behave better where I am going; I will try, and then, perhaps, I shall be forgiven and brought back to my dear, dear home, and to the dear children." She then broke out afresh into tears, and begged to be permitted to kiss the children. But Eusebius had gone out with the children, in order, no doubt, that he might be out of the way on this painful occasion; and poor Sally was obliged to walk away carrying a bundle of some of her favourite possessions from that house, which had long afforded her so happy a shelter, to become, a second time, the inhabitant of a cottage.

The Lord is jealous for the widow and the orphan, and

He often overrules for their good those events which are planned by the enemy for their destruction.

Thus it proved with respect to Sally; for in the retirement of the cottage she recovered in a short time her former composed state of mind. The good lessons of piety which Laura had habitually given to her, began again to resume their wonted influence; and though she grew coarse and comparatively negligent in her person and external appearance, her affliction was, nevertheless, producing a good work within her, and she was become far more sensible than she had ever previously been of all the numberless advantages which she owed to her more than mother.

Thus three quarters of a year were elapsed since Laura had left her home, and the time for her returning thither now approached. Her health, which had been fervently prayed for many times by the afflicted Sally, as well as by several others, was restored to her, and the day for her return was at length fixed. The meeting between Laura and her affectionate husband, was as tender as might be expected. Eusebius went to meet her some miles on the road, and all the happy children, with Belinda, were waiting to run into her arms as she stepped out of the carriage—Laura wept, and smiled, and wept again. But many minutes had not passed before she asked for Sally, and an evasive answer being given, (for nothing had been mentioned to her by letter of the affairs of the poor orphan,) her attention was diverted for a time to some other darling object newly restored to her sight. Sally, however, was too near the heart of Laura, for her to continue much longer without repeating her enquiry after her, which she did to her little daughter, bidding her, in a whisper, call her dear Sally to her; but then considering that the parlour might, perhaps, have been interdicted to the orphan, she took the little Laura's hand, and said softly, "We will now go, my dear, and find our dear Sally."

The young Laura went out with her mamma, and had reached the nursery in company with her before she dared to utter a word, at length bursting into tears, she said, "Dear mamma, poor Sally does not live in the house now."

Laura, truly astonished, now recollected that for some

months past even the name of Sally had not been mentioned in any letter, a circumstance which she had hitherto attributed to forgetfulness, and she now eagerly enquired of her little daughter, the reason why she had been removed.

The little Laura explained the matter to her mamma as well as she could: but it was doubtful from her statement, whether she thought that Sally had deserved to be sent away or not; for she gave such a confused account of her being among the servants, sometimes saying that it was by her aunt's orders, and sometimes laying the blame on Sally herself, that her mamma was by no means satisfied with what she had told her, and she was altogether so shocked by the circumstance, that she burst into a violent flood of tears, and was found weeping when Belinda came to call her to tea.

It was Laura's desire, on all occasions, to act from reason and principle rather than feeling; therefore, although she was thoroughly distressed at what she had just heard respecting poor Sally, and although she had reason to suspect some grievous mismanagement on the part of Belinda, yet when called to join her assembled family at tea, she wiped away her tears, and endeavoured to appear cheerful. Notwithstanding her efforts, a cloud of sorrow, however, rested on her brow, and as she caressed her youngest child, who sat on her lap, she thought much of Sally, and recollected many little circumstances of her infancy, which now filled her mind with emotions of bitter anguish.

She, however, preserved her self-possession till after tea, and till the children had retired to bed, when her husband tenderly taking her hand, on observing a tear start in her eye, requested her to explain the cause of a sorrow which was too evident, and which seemed, as he said, extraordinary, on an occasion so joyful as that of the restoration of a wife and mother to her husband and children.

Laura could now restrain herself no longer, and said, "I am grieved to interrupt the joy of my friends by my impertinent sorrow, but I must confess that the sad news which I have just heard of my poor Sally has greatly afflicted me."

Eusebius, who was not at all conscious of any inten-

tional unkindness to Sally, entered into an explanation of the whole affair, as he had himself seen it, and heard it represented by his sister, in a manner so cool and dispassionate, that Laura knew not what to think, or whom to blame, though she still felt almost convinced that had she continued at home, nothing of this would have happened. She prayed, however, that she might be preserved from yielding in any measure either to angry passion or unreasonable feeling, and that she might be directed to act as a friend of the fatherless, and as a peace-maker to all parties.

When Laura awoke in the morning, which was not till rather later than usual, she found her two little daughters watching by her bed-side, and when they had kissed her, and expressed anew their joy at her return, they put into her hands a small soiled and ill-spelled note from Sally. "It is from Sally, mamma," they said, "our own poor Sally, and she gave it to us at the garden-gate this morning, and nobody saw us."

"Nobody saw you, my children!" said Laura, "and have you learned to do things slyly? Remember that you used to tell me every thing that you did."

"And so we shall again, mamma," said the little girls, "and we have begun to do it; but our aunt would have been so angry if she had seen us with Sally!"

"Well, well," said Laura, "I hope that all will be set right now, and though our poor Sally has been naughty, I trust that you still love her and pray for her."

"Indeed we do," said the little girls, "and little Arthur, whom our poor Sally used to love so much, he even prays for her every day; and you cannot think how he cried when she was sent away."

Sally's note, which was written on a blank leaf torn out of some book, was full of joyous expressions for the return of her dear, dear mamma, as in her ecstacy she ventured to call Laura; it also contained many confessions of her faults, but no complaints of any one, and concluded with an earnest request that she might be taken in again.

Laura was much affected, not only by the letter itself, but also by the many indications that it contained of the neglected and desolate state of the child whom she had hitherto preserved with so much tenderness. The paper

on which the note was written was dirty, the hand almost illegible, and the words were ill-spelled. "And is the downward road," thought Laura to herself, "so easy, so very easy? is the labour of years so soon defeated? Oh my Sally! my Sally! better would it have been to have seen thee in thy grave, than to see thee thus cast out! thus abandoned!"

It was in vain that Laura strove to seem cheerful at breakfast, but she at least succeeded in appearing gentle and good-humoured.

After breakfast she examined some old writings, and found a slip of paper on which was written these words: "On such a day, in such year, it was promised me by Mr. E———, &c., that he would permit me, if I became his wife, to adopt as my own, Sarah ————, and afford her every protection and kindness which a daughter might require of a mother." Laura inclosed this paper in an envelope, and sent it by her little daughter to her husband, who spent most of his mornings in his study.

Eusebius was affected by the sight of this memorandum, which had been written in his presence, and signed by himself: it reminded him of the early stage of his connexion with his beloved Laura, and induced him to take a swift review of all those excellencies which had rendered his life, as a married man, more happy than is commonly experienced in the conjugal state.

His first wish was immediately to oblige his dear Laura, and, at all events, to recal Sally. But it must be remembered that his mind was thoroughly poisoned with respect to this young person, whom he believed to be a truly depraved girl; and he felt that, as the father of a family, he should act with a blameable weakness if he allowed his wife again to introduce such a character as an inmate of his house. He thought it, therefore, his duty, to say that Sally must, for the present, continue where she was, or at least in some other suitable situation, apart from his children; he was desirous, however, of signifying to Laura, as tenderly as possible, his opposition to her wishes. He, therefore, instead of returning a written answer to her note, himself went into her dressing-room, and, accosting her with the utmost tenderness, he expressed the pain which he felt in refusing her any thing that she could desire, but he, nevertheless, declared,

that such had been the depravity of Sally's conduct, that he must still continue his refusal to admit her into his house as the companion of his children.

Laura heard this decision with grief evidently sincere. She even ventured to advance several arguments. But Eusebius was not to be shaken; and, therefore, all the success that she could meet with was to obtain permission to preside over Sally at a distance.

Laura's mind was so far subjected to the control of Christian principle, that she was enabled patiently to yield to this trial, and she resolved to do so, if possible, without shewing the least resentment towards her sister: for, from her enquiries among the servants and children, she had now become fully convinced that Sally's misfortunes were owing to the indiscreet and unfeeling management of Belinda. While, however, she was considering how, in this affair, she ought to act as a Christian towards her husband and sister, she did not lose sight of her duty to Sally. She addressed to her a tender and affectionate letter, wherein she stated her own willingness to overlook all that was past, and again to receive her to her heart; but she added, that those on whom she depended not having the same regard for her, could not be prevailed upon to pass over her faults, or to re-admit her into the situation which she formerly occupied in the family.

She also represented to her, that she owed this affliction entirely to her own evil conduct, and she failed not to state, that, if she had preserved her prudence, the Lord would then have been on her side, and no one could have injured her. "Had you," she said, "been discreet, my beloved Sally, and not fallen into those disgraceful faults with which every one charges you, I should have been enabled to maintain your cause against the whole world. But you have, by your own folly, at once stopped the mouth and tied the hands of her who loves you with a mother's love, and we must both abide for a while the painful consequences of your conduct."

Laura then proceeded to point out to Sally the important doctrine of man's thorough incapacity and utter weakness to do well, and she failed not to shew her where, in future, she must seek assistance under trials and distresses. She concluded by assuring her that she

should never cease to labour and pray for their reunion, adding, that nothing would so much conduce to it as her good behaviour in the situation which she now occupied.

When Laura sent this letter, she forwarded with it a basket, containing a variety of little presents and comforts, such as, for the most part, only a mother would have thought of; neither did she without tears deliver the basket and letter to the person who was to carry them.

On further enquiry, Laura became increasingly sensible that Sally owed all her afflictions to the pragmatical mismanagement of Belinda, and for a short time this conviction filled her mind with resentment. But Laura was a Christian not only in word, but also in spirit, and she habitually bore in mind the instructions given by our Lord to Peter concerning an offending brother—*Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.* (Matt. xviii. 21, 22.)

The object of this story is, to shew wherein true charity consists. It does not consist in splendid and momentary acts of heroism, or in any sudden extraordinary exertions in the behalf of a fellow-creature: other motives besides Christian charity may induce persons to works of this kind. As St. Paul saith—*Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.* (1 Cor. xiii. 3.) But true charity consists in an abiding, unostentatious preference of a man's neighbour before himself: neither does such charity consist with that headlong and vehement spirit which leads a man to patronize one individual at the expence of all the rest of the world; but it consists in a careful and tender regard to the various feelings of others, in an earnest solicitude to promote their welfare, especially in a spiritual sense, and in an habitual disposition to make all due allowance for the weakness and infirmities of our neighbours, and that without partiality or respect of persons.

And herein appeared in an especial manner the charity of Laura; for while she was secretly and severely wounded by the injuries which she had suffered in the person of her dear Sally, she endeavoured to make every possible allowance for Belinda, and she never broke out into

murmurs or complaints with respect to her in the presence of her brother, nor did she alter in any degree the sweetness of her carriage towards her, although she took every care to keep her from again exerting the same busy spirit in the family by which she had so greatly injured Sally.

Laura had submitted, indeed, to the pleasure of her husband with respect to her beloved orphan; but her heart still yearned after her eldest child, as she called her, and she continually, yet gently, attempted to restore her to the good opinion of Eusebius: and, as Sally behaved well in her seclusion, Laura found the less difficulty in bringing back his mind to the point at which she aimed.

Thus passed away four months after Laura's return to her home, and she had never yet seen Sally once since, because her husband had carefully made it a point that she should not, although she had allowed scarcely a day to pass without sending her some token of love, or some little memorial by which she might encourage her to persevere in well-doing.

It happened at the close of this period that as Laura was walking one evening with her husband and sister, at an abrupt turn of a narrow lane, she was suddenly met by Sally, who was carrying a basket on her arm, and who presented a certain negligence in her appearance which touched her adopted parent to the heart.

No sooner did these two persons, whose reciprocal affection was so sincere, thus meet, than they ran into each other's arms; and Sally, sinking upon her knees, broke out into such an agony of mingled grief and joy, that the heart of Eusebius was quite melted, and he readily gave Laura permission to receive her adopted child once again under her roof.

Thus did the gentleness and patience of Laura under this trial, triumph over the prejudices of her friends. She thanked her husband for his kindness with tears of joy, and giving Sally a handsome present to carry to the poor woman, who had taken care of her during her banishment, she directed her immediately to return to her home.

I cannot convey even an idea of the joy which diffused itself throughout all Laura's little family when Sally appeared, and was reinstated in all her former privileges

being restored to her old companions and her little chamber. She seemed to have no desire whatever, to renew her frolics in the kitchen; and this circumstance Laura regarded as an especial token for good: as when a young person has once been led to indulge a relish for improper society, it is much to be feared that she may never again lose the taste for it.

It always remained a matter of doubt in the mind of Laura, whether Belinda was at all conscious of the great mistake of which she had been guilty with respect to Sally; if, however, she was at all sensible of it, still she was by no means humbled by it, for she always cherished the same self-confidence which led her to the commission of this error. She had no idea of putting herself in imagination in the place of another, and of entering into the feelings of that person; and therefore, even when on the whole she was desirous of doing well, she often offended, and always wounded; and actually, as we have clearly seen on one occasion, she often did a great deal of mischief to those persons with whom she interfered.

In every view which she took of life, it might be said of her, that self was the most prominent object, and every other was, in consequence, presented to the eye of her understanding in a false and unfavourable point of view. She valued characters only on account of their particular bearings or relations with respect to herself, and she allowed herself in different modes and principles of calculating with reference to herself and with reference to another.

Those who lived with her, had, in consequence, much to bear, and as whatever was done for her always fell short of the sense which she had of her own deserts, she could, of course, have but few feelings of gratitude.

She was, at the same time, a strong professor of the Christian religion, and she was not without certain good qualities; but, as the foundation of Christianity must lie in deep humility, it cannot be expected that real piety should ever dwell with allowed and habitual pride.

Laura persevered in the same even and lovely course, till the end of a long and comparatively peaceful life. She saw several of her children happily married, and she embraced her children's children on her knees.

Sally, who, from the time when she was brought back to the house of Eusebius, had conducted herself with great propriety, was married, at a suitable age, to a mechanic in the neighbourhood, a pious young man; and Eusebius gratified his beloved Laura by providing the complete furniture of their little dwelling, and adding the present of ten guineas on the wedding-day; which last gift he annually repeated.

When Sally became a mother, and not till then, she fully felt the value of what Laura had done for her, and her consequent lively sense of gratitude induced her ardently to seek the gratification of her adopted parent in every action of her life. Thus the influence of Laura over Sally daily increased, and Laura availed herself of it to lead her more and more closely to her Saviour.

Notwithstanding the difference of their conditions, a sweet and tender friendship also continued to subsist between Laura's children and Sally, and they frequently visited her in her humble little dwelling; and in times of sickness and distress these friends were ever ready mutually to console each other.

Thus Laura set before the world an example of persevering and invariable kindness and benevolence; pursuing one object through a course of many years opposed by various hindrances and obstacles, amidst objects of disgust, in fatigues, and under the frowns and reproofs of friends, and proceeding with unwearied constancy till she had completely effected the point which she had at first in view: while Belinda, who was continually talking on the subject of charity, and professedly forming plans for the good of her neighbours, was enabled to bring little or nothing to maturity, because, whenever her own ease or her credit in the eyes of the world came in competition with the fulfilment of her plans for doing good, she took offence, and desisted from her purpose. But Belinda walked in her own strength, while Laura went on in the strength of the Lord.

Here the lady of the manor closed her manuscript, and, promising the young people her third story on our duty towards our neighbours on the occasion of their next meeting, she called them to prayer with her before they separated.

*A Prayer for our due Behaviour towards our Inferiors.*

"O ALMIGHTY LORD GOD, thou King of kings and Lord of lords, who, nevertheless, for our sakes didst condescend to take upon thee the form of a servant, and, being in the likeness of a man, to endure every infirmity of our nature, though thou wast yet without sin; we humbly beseech thee to endue us with that spirit of charity which suffereth long and is kind, which beareth all things, which endureth all things, which seeketh not her own; that, feeling that the poorest creature is our fellow-creature, we may be enabled to persevere in our course of duty without looking for reward, without yielding to disgust, and without stumbling at reproach. Teach us, while we hate sin, to compassionate the sinner, to pity his helplessness, to administer to his wants, to bear with his ingratitude, to endure his obstinacy, and to love him notwithstanding his loathsomeness.

"Grant, O blessed Lord God, that our charity may be sincere and fervent, that it may not seek its reward from men, but be content to await it from God, and that it may not be chilled by circumstances, or by any apparent want of success. And grant, O gracious God, that we may not be ostentatious in our charities, but that we may be carefully observant of our Saviour's injunction—not to let our left hand know what our right hand doeth; and whenever we may act either in or for any charitable society, may we be preserved from that spirit which too often excites an individual to seek his own glory, to the great injury of the good work in which he may be engaged. Divest us, O God, by thy sanctifying and renewing Spirit, of all self-seeking of every description. May the praise of man be an abomination in our ears; and may our every action be influenced by the desire of promoting the glory of Thee, O God, and of Thyself alone.

"And now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be all glory and honour, now and for evermore. Amen."

# CHAPTER XXVI.

## Third Conversation on our Duty towards our Neighbour.

### ON OUR DUTY TOWARDS OUR SUPERIORS, OR THOSE PERSONS WHO HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OVER US IN WORLDLY MATTERS.

THE lady of the manor having again assembled her young people, proceeded to read to them the third narrative which had been promised, prefacing her lecture by the following remarks. "In the last two narratives which I have read to you, my dear young friends, as well as in that which I am about to read, it is possible you may perceive what will have the appearance of unnecessary repetition,—a frequent reference to the great and important principle of humility. But let it be remembered, that this virtue is the basis of all our relative duties, whether to equals, inferiors, or superiors; and therefore the possession of such a quality, and the means of obtaining it, namely, by the operation of God's Spirit upon the heart, cannot be too seriously impressed upon us; the more especially, as the baneful evil of selfishness will lose its power in proportion to the influence which this lovely grace shall exercise over us; while the fruits

of love, and joy, and peace, will obtain influence, in the place of those malevolent passions that injure and disgrace us.

The lady then took up her manuscript, and read as follows.

## THE DOMINION OF ENVY.

It was precisely at the period in which I entered my eighteenth year, that I was indulged with the pleasure of accompanying my parents in a long-projected visit to a friend residing in Westmoreland.

We left our home in the month of June, and as we proceeded northward, we were regaled in every valley and on every plain with the breath of new-mown grass, and with the songs of village maidens, who appeared to rejoice in their escape from the distaff, and in the permission to dwell awhile amidst the green fields, to taste the delights of rural life.

It is not, however, my present purpose to trouble my readers with an account of the various adventures which we encountered in our transit over at least two-thirds of the green and fragrant disk of our little island; nor to tell how my mother and I were terrified by a baker's boy, whom we mistook for a highwayman, not having at first observed his panniers through the gloom of twilight: but, passing these things over as unimportant, I shall take the liberty of conveying my friends, without further preface, to the end of our journey.

The persons for whom all these labours and terrors of the journey had been encountered by my mother, were an ancient couple without children, and the last of a highly respectable family, the ancestors of whom were traced as far back as the reign of Elizabeth.

The mansion in which they resided was nearly coeval with the first of the family, who had risen from the obscure mass of the ignoble vulgar; and, from the period of its first erection, had undergone few external changes. This building was a perfect specimen of that irregularity of architecture, in which our ancestors seemed to delight, no two rooms or two windows being in a straight line with each other, various gable ends and little turrets appearing in different directions, staring, frowning, and

jutting forth towards all quarters of the compass, and suggesting an idea rather of a number of old buildings joined together, than of a single house. The composition of this edifice was of oak timber, with lath and plaster; the timbers were all painted black and curiously carved; and the large masses of chimneys, which shot up spirally towards the heavens, were decorated at their bases with fancy work in brick, and were now blackened with smoke. This edifice was surrounded with a garden, encircled with a high wall, which entirely excluded the prospect, beautiful as it was, from all the lower rooms; for the estate was situated in one of the finest valleys of Westmoreland; but, in exchange for the more distant beauties which were excluded, it formed a protection for the rich abundance of fair and fruitful trees which enriched the parterres of the garden.

Four summer-houses, with pepper-box turrets, adorned the four corners of the wall; and these, together with a lofty cupola at the top of the house, containing a clock, whose bell might be heard at a very considerable distance, were accounted, by my father's old friend, as the most distinguishing ornaments of the mansion and its environs.

It was at the period of life in which the imagination is commonly stronger than the judgment, that I was introduced into this scene, and I was not a little delighted at finding myself suddenly surrounded with objects of a nature so entirely different to all that I had ever seen in the little town in which I had been brought up, and where my father had been considered a man of importance, because his grandfather had built the house in which we lived, and had inclosed the court in its front with handsome iron railings, and placed a stone figure of some magnitude in a niche above the hall door! But how did all ideas of my father's dignity and the antiquity of my family shrink into nothing, as I was led to my sleeping-room, the first night, through a long gallery, where all the possessors of Inglewood Hall (for such was the name of the mansion of which I am speaking) were ranged in long order against the wall on each side; every patriarch, or head of the family, for the time being, accompanied by his help-meet, and, in many cases, by a numerous progeny of sons and daughters, all por-

trayed with more or less skill, but in the fashions of the times, and in some instances possessing fine features and noble physiognomies.

Late as it was, and weary as I was with my journey, I could have lingered long in this gallery, had not the lady of the mansion, who would on no account dispense with the form of shewing me to my chamber the first night, requested me to postpone my curiosity for the present, promising to take me over the house the next day, and shew me all that was worthy of regard within it. It was necessary to submit to this decision: I accordingly went on with my dignified companion, and having threaded many mazes, and passed through many wide chambers, I shortly found myself in a comfortable room, hung with tapestry, and containing a small bed in an alcove. Being left in this place, I soon fell asleep, but awoke with the dawn of the day, and found my spirits in a state of too much excitement to sleep again.

Having explored my room, and examined the figures on the hangings, which were of the finest Gobelyn, though considerably faded, and which represented ancient halls and castles, knights in armour, ladies, and squires, I was proceeding to take a view through the stone-framed window at the end of the chamber, when my attention was arrested by a glimmering light, appearing through a part of the tapestry, where I presently discovered a door, nicely fitted into the wall, and almost concealed by the general covering.

Here was a new subject for my curiosity: but much as I desired to see what was beyond the door, I might, perhaps, have been better pleased had I met with some difficulty in opening it. However, this was not to be. There was a wooden button on the frame, which I had scarcely touched, before the mysterious door yielded to my hand, and the next moment I found myself in a large light closet, hung also with tapestry, having a fire-place with a massily carved chimney-piece, and containing an old harpsichord, a little bookcase, standing on claw feet and inclosing several volumes, a round mahogany table with a ledge, several chairs, and a few old music-books neatly ranged upon the instrument. But what chiefly attracted my attention in this little chamber (which, though not so mysterious a one as I could have

wished, I doubted not, had some peculiar history belonging to it) was a portrait which occupied a great portion of one side of the room. This painting represented a lady dressed in black, and in the fashion which prevailed about the middle of the last century, before the ill-fated Queen of France had introduced those preposterous forms of dress which produced a total revolution in the form of a lady of taste. The figure was a fine one; the face had been remarkably handsome, though the lady I should judge to have been considerably advanced in years before the resemblance was taken.

When I first looked at this picture, I thought I observed considerable sternness in the countenance, but on further examination I rather changed my opinion, and fancied I remarked the lines of sorrow traced on the features, together with a degree of tenderness, which seemed, as it were, to contend with natural strength and sternness. The hand which wrought this portrait was, undoubtedly, a skilful one.

I looked for a while on the picture, and then on every surrounding object. "This lady," I thought, "probably, when alive, occupied this chamber; those were, perhaps, her books; that might have been her musical instrument; she, perhaps, used to sit on that chair, and spread her work on that table;—but where is she now? Where are those with whom she associated—her neighbours, her friends, her servants? For whom did she wear that black dress? Whom did she love? whom did she regret? What were her thoughts? what were her acts?" There is something very affecting in being brought into close contact with the dead. It is possible to reflect without powerful emotion on the destruction of whole countries by an earthquake—on the sinking of whole fleets at sea—on the disappearance of generation after generation—on the depopulation of ancient cities, and the extinction of the noblest families;—but who could have visited Herculaneum, and entered into the very domicile of the ancient Romans, and contemplated the skeleton of the mother embracing that of the infant, without deep and lasting feelings of sympathy and tenderness?

Having gazed on every thing within the room, I walked to the window and opened the casement; for I felt a

faintness which I partly attributed to a confined air which is often found in old buildings, in which the work of decay must necessarily be going on, however slowly, and partly to the feelings which had been suddenly excited within me; and there, what a wonderful, what a glorious prospect opened to my view over the garden wall and trees, and between the woods!

Between the wall and the bottom of the valley, was a lawn or sheep-walk, scattered over with flocks, and beyond this a clear and beautiful lake, inclosed on the opposite side by a range of hills, the lower parts of which were richly variegated with trees, and studded with little thatched cottages and small farms, and the higher regions of which, though the hills were of inferior magnitude when compared with the height of the Himalayas and the Andes, or even of those lofty Alpine regions where an eternal winter reigns at the distance of eight thousand feet above the level of the sea, nevertheless were, in fact, above the clouds, their blue summits appearing at that time higher than the morning mist which had ascended from the lake at sunrise, and was becoming condensed as it rolled upwards.

My mind had been previously led to serious reflections by the objects on which I had been meditating, and now the beautiful works of creation which opened before me gave a pious turn to my reflections. The shortness of man's life, even when compared with other works of the Creator, in this sublunary state, particularly impressed me. "No doubt," I thought, "the lady whom I have been looking upon loved and admired this scene. That lawn and lake, those woods and hills, were often gazed upon by her. But the eye that beheld these beauties shall see them no more: her place knoweth her no longer. *Man cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.—As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up; so man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.*" (Job xiv. 2, 11, 12.)

And here, if it be not irrelevant, I will pause to make some remarks on the effects which are frequently produced on an enlightened intellect by a contemplation of the beauties of nature. A fine prospect, when first

beheld, always conveys the idea of happiness; we cannot imagine that the inhabitants of a picturesque region can be low or miserable: and hence, no doubt, in a great measure, proceeds that peculiar kind of fascination which we often experience in travelling through a beautiful country, with whose inhabitants we are unacquainted. The imagination conceives that what is so outwardly fair must be productive of happiness; and thus it amuses itself in a kind of elysium of its own, till awakened from its dreams by reflection and experience. In our ideas, however, of moral beauty and perfection, we are greatly assisted by our associations with the beauties of nature; and much more frequently, no doubt, should we make use of such aid, were it not that our minds are alienated from the subject by the influence of sin. The things most lovely in creation are used by God as emblems of unseen things, and of the rest and glory of the latter days. We are warranted by Scripture to look into the Book of Nature to find the pictures of the happiness and consolation of the believer in the resurrection. As water to the thirsty lips, so are the promises of God; and blessed is he, who cannot walk forth into the woods, or contemplate the distant mountain, the fertile valley, the dripping rill, the airy sheep-down, or the opening bud, without an enlargement of those views of future glory which are held out to the lowly disciples of Christ. In the sparkling jewels which adorn her birth-day suit, her blazing coronet, and chains of gold, may not the royal and noble lady, if she be a child of God, behold the symbols of those ornaments with which the heavenly Bridegroom will, at some future period, adorn the members of his Church? In the spotless robe she wears, may she not find the type of that robe of righteousness in which the Lamb will array his bride? In the richly-ornamented pleasure-ground, the shadowy grove, the open lawn, and the perfumed garden, which surround her dwelling, may she not see a lively representation of what the earth will be when the banner of the cross shall blaze as a beacon on the heights of Zion, and all nations shall flow unto it; when showers of blessings shall be shed on every valley; when the wilderness shall blossom as the rose, and gushing fountains shall be heard in every dell; when wild beasts shall cease from the land,

and the people of the Lord shall dwell quietly in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods?

But perhaps I may be dwelling too long on this subject. I therefore hasten back to my narrative, and shall proceed to say, that while I was still considering the beautiful scene beheld from the closet, I was made aware, by the sound of a bell, of which I had been apprized, that breakfast was ready, and accordingly hastened down stairs, resolving to make myself better acquainted, if possible, with the history of the lady who had engaged so many of my thoughts.

Upon enquiry I found, that the unmarried name of the person respecting whom I was so inquisitive, had been Matilda Vincent, that she had possessed the estates of Inglewood for some time, and had been dead more than forty years: it was further added, that she had been a singular character, and had shewn her singularity by leaving behind her written memoirs of her life, in which she had taken so little care to guard her name from the ill opinion of her successors, that she had made a full, true, and perfect confession of many parts of her life with which no one could have been otherwise acquainted, and which, certainly, set her in no amiable point of view; "though," remarked our dignified hostess, from whom I received this account, "if you, my young friend, are willing to read, and even to copy these memorandums, you will find nothing in these confessions which can be injurious, in any way, to your mind. I only wonder at this, that any lady should have taken pleasure in leaving behind her any memorials of her own errors."

My father replied, that probably the lady in question left this narrative in somewhat the same spirit in which a benevolent navigator would like to publish an account of an unfortunate voyage—in order to warn others against the rocks and shoals upon which he had suffered shipwreck.

"It may be so," replied the old lady, "and if your daughter chooses to read the manuscript, I will deliver it into her hands as soon as we have inspected the house; and she may, if agreeable, retire to her closet to peruse it: for," added she, "it was in that very closet that it was written, and which, out of respect to the writer, we have left precisely in the state in which we found

it; no article having been removed from it since her death."

I could say much of the delight with which I received this permission; but having already said more of myself than I at first intended, I will now withdraw into the back-ground, and introduce my readers to other persons more worthy of their notice.

## THE MEMOIRS OF MATILDA VINCENT.

"It having pleased the Almighty Ruler of all things to call me, the chief of sinners, to come into his gracious presence, and to receive his free grace and pardon, which were obtained for me by the precious death of his beloved Son, I have thought it right, at an advanced period of my life, lest I should be led impiously to take credit to myself for that which has been wrought for me by God alone, to note down certain circumstances of my life, on which, should my memory fail, I may look, from time to time, and be reminded of those dreadful errors of my life, by which I truly deserve to be called the chief of sinners.

"I had my origin from a family of credit in this country. My grandfather, who possessed large estates in this vicinity, with this spacious mansion in which I now dwell, had one son and two daughters. The elder of these daughters married, and went to reside at a distance; but the second, who was my mother, remained at home till my grandfather died and her brother was married, at which time, or soon after, she was united to one in very low circumstances, who presently spent all her property, and left her, but whither he went, or what became of him, was never known. It was shortly after my birth that my father left us, and my mother did not long survive his desertion of her, in consequence of which I became a needy orphan in early infancy. I was not, however, suffered to know pecuniary distress—for my uncle came in his coach-and-six, and brought me with my nurse home to his house, and there I remained till I married.

"The modes of education then were very different to what they are now. Boarding-schools were little frequented, and the governesses appointed to take care of

young ladies at home were little better than upper servants. However, my uncle did for me as for his own offspring, for he had but one child, a daughter, about my own age. We were brought up together in one nursery till our days of babyhood were expired, and then, as my aunt was dead, (for she died soon after the birth of her daughter,) we were placed under the care of a governess, who exercised us in needlework and in playing on the harpsichord, a talent but little cultivated in those days.

"My uncle made little difference, in his manner of treatment, between me and my cousin, (who, being christened Agnes, was called by the servants, according to the custom of those days, Mrs. Agnes,) excepting that he sometimes took her out with him in his coach, to visit a neighbour, when, on some pretence or other, he would leave me at home; and though this seldom happened, it gave me great offence. On one of these occasions, when I could not have been so much as ten years of age, I remember listening to a conversation between my governess and the housekeeper, as they were drinking tea together in the housekeeper's room, and taking it for granted that I was so much occupied with my painted baby as to have no ears for their impertinent and mischievous gossip. They were speaking of the high fortunes which little Mrs. Agnes had a title to, and of the great match which she would have a right to expect; and then they spoke of me; and the governess said she had reason to suppose my parents had not left me a sixpence.

"'But,' said the housekeeper, 'you may be sure her uncle will not forget her, but will give her something considerable out of his vast property.'

"'When gentlemen have children of their own,' replied the governess, 'they are not always so ready to give fortunes to other people.'

"'True,' said the housekeeper; 'but I shall think it cruel if poor Miss Matilda is quite cut off from her grandfather's property, and that for the sake of a girl only.'

"'Why, true,' replied the governess, 'had it been a boy who stood thus in her way, it would have been quite a different thing.'

"These wise persons then proceeded to discuss our respective merits with regard to beauty; and as, upon the whole, the advantage was decided to be on the side

of my cousin, I found myself excluded in every instance, and, young as I was, I was strongly sensible of the mortification. I was still reflecting upon what had passed, my doll lying disregarded on my lap, when my little cousin returned, and entered the housekeeper's room, whither she had come in pursuit of her governess and of me.

"I remember, to this moment, her dress and general appearance on that occasion. She wore a full slip of rose-coloured taffety, with an apron of the finest lace; on her head was a small round cap, with an artificial flower on one side; a row of pearls adorned her neck, and bracelets of the same, her arms.

"She was generally pale, but the air and exercise had given a blush to her cheeks, and added much to her beauty. She came forward to me with much affection in her manner, and kissing me, she presented me with a small paper of dried sweetmeats, which she had brought from a lady to whom her father had introduced her during their airing; but I have no doubt that I received them with a very bad grace—for nothing makes a person so awkward as being under the influence of the mean passion of envy.

"These first feelings of envy which had been excited within me by the injudicious conversation of the governess and housekeeper, were not permitted to die away; although my cousin always conducted herself towards me with the most invariable sweetness, and evidently had no suspicion of the dispositions which I indulged towards her; but, as I was continually exposed to hear the same kind of discourse, envy of my cousin's more distinguished lot at length took such effect upon me, that I became secretly very unhappy, and, as I advanced in age, these sentiments held such entire possession of my mind, that it became materially injured and polluted by them.

"Those who are not acquainted with the depravity of the human heart, will plead, that the perversion of my mind on this subject was entirely owing to the injudicious and evil suggestions of the persons with whom I dwelt; but I answer, that these cruel suggestions would have failed in producing such effects, had they not met with a mind in me prepared for their reception.

"There are, perhaps, no evil passions which are so carefully guarded from the eyes of the world, as those

which proceed from envy. Whoever is envious of another, confesses his inferiority to that person in some one point of view or other; and, to a proud and worldly character, how painful is an acknowledgment that we are outshone in any one particular in which we wish to excel! So painful, indeed, were these feelings to which I was subjected, that I would not even avow them, if I could help it, to myself, but, on the contrary, I endeavoured to persuade myself that I loved my cousin; and was careful not to omit any mark of outward respect and affection, by which I might evince to the world, and to Agnes herself, the strength of my regard, and of my devotedness.

"In the mean time, I continually indulged myself in that pernicious pleasure to which the selfish and indolent are invariably addicted, and which, being within the reach of all, is, perhaps, more widely fatal than almost any other evil practice—that is, in the formation of airy visions of happiness, by which self is placed in that situation where the evil desires of the heart have every opportunity of gratification. These are the chambers of imagery into which unregenerated persons enter, in the dark hours of night, to commit abomination with their idols, saying, '*The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth.*' (Ezek. viii. 12.)

"In these views of fancied happiness and triumph, I was myself, of course, the first object—I was then put in full possession of all the estates and honours of my cousin. I was clothed in her most superb dresses—was adorned in her jewels—and received the homage of her dependents. On these imaginary occasions, she was excluded; while her interests and welfare were entirely remote from my mind. But how this had been effected, was a part of the picture which I ever left in shade, being unwilling to unveil, even to my own eyes, the murderous tendency of my wishes. Oh! how deeply wicked and deceitful is the human heart! how dreadful the designs of ambition! and how closely allied is envy to the foulest crimes of which our nature is capable! Yet man is formed with an insatiable thirst for happiness; and if he has been taught to consider that happiness consists in earthly possessions and distinctions, all attempts to make him cease to covet them, or to hate those who seem to

stand in the way of his possessing them, must be fruitless, without such an interference of the Divine favour as shall change entirely the current of his affections.

"The desires of the natural man are, undoubtedly, ever inclining towards earthly objects; nevertheless, his ambition, and, consequently, his feelings of envy towards his superiors, may be inflamed on the one hand by indiscreet conversation, and, on the other, may be greatly diminished, even in the minds of unregenerate young persons, by a frequent recurrence in their presence to the concerns of a future life, and suitable comparisons between the things of eternity and those of the present state of being.

"There is, perhaps, no study which conveys such adequate ideas of the instability of human greatness, as that of history; especially when we connect with it a view of prophecy, and of those representations which the Scriptures give us of the kingdom of Christ, where the true glory is exhibited; in comparison of which, all the pomp and pride of earthly things appear but as the painted toys and baubles of early childhood. The feeling which I have described above, continued rather to increase than to diminish, till I was nineteen years of age; but I have no reason to suppose that my real character was ever suspected by any one about me.

"At this time my uncle said to us, one morning at breakfast, that he expected a young gentleman to visit him in a few days, the son of a respected friend, whom he had not seen for many years; adding, that he hoped we should be prepared to make the house agreeable to him.

"'And what are we to call him?' said my cousin Agnes, smiling; 'for it would not be polite to seem ignorant of his name, when he bestows upon us the honour of his company.'

"'Clarence Fitzgerald,' replied my uncle; 'he is the son of my old friend, General Fitzgerald, of whom you have often heard me speak.'

"My cousin, who had great simplicity of mind, received this command of her father's, as she did every other, without making any comment upon it; but I began instantly to consider whether there might not be something more in this proposed visit than my uncle would have us suppose, and, after turning the matter over and

over again in my own mind, I at length made out that this Mr. Clarence Fitzgerald was the intended husband of my cousin; and then my imagination went to work to embellish this chosen youth with all the desirable qualities of a partner for life for one so highly gifted and endowed as my cousin Agnes, and, when I had considered the matter for a while, I became more and more inflamed with envy, and more and more ready to inveigh against the justice of Providence towards myself.

"While these things occupied my mind, my cousin Agnes, who never enjoyed very good health, was taken ill, and was obliged to confine herself to her room, and then the idea occurred to me, that I could not advance my own interest more effectually than by availing myself of the opportunity, which I hoped to have, of securing the young gentleman's affection to myself—should fortune so far favour me as to continue the illness of my cousin for some time after the arrival of the expected visiter. I say *fortune*, in order to accommodate myself to the mode of thinking I then indulged; for I did not then consider that there is no such thing as chance, but that such affairs are ordered and regulated by the Almighty Ruler—without whom, not even a sparrow falleth to the ground.

"I was sitting alone in our common parlour, when I was apprized, by a loud ringing at the outer court, of the arrival of Mr. Fitzgerald. Persons who are full of projects and views of self-interest, are ever liable to fearful apprehensions, which persons of more simplicity are not troubled with. Now the moment approached which I had so long desired, I began to tremble, and looked around me in haste, considering what would be the effect of the first *coup d'œil* which was to break upon the young man on his entering the room. The parlour was, for that period of time, an elegant apartment, being large and high, and wainscoted with oak, having a cornice composed of a running pattern of the same wood, whereon were represented many delicately-shaped birds, resting on leaves and branches of trees. The floor was brightly polished, and the furniture covered with fine chintz, a large folding glass door was open to the garden, and on each side of this door were couches, with tables before them, on which I had scattered my drawings, my

books, and some specimens of fine needle-work. I contrived to seem engaged with my guitar at the instant in which hasty steps in the hall advertised me that the visiter was near at hand, and I only laid it down at the moment when Mr. Clarence Fitzgerald entered the room, and presented a figure which more than answered all my preconceived ideas of him.

"I had perhaps never seen a young man who so entirely answered my notions of the perfect gentleman, as the person who then entered the room; he was, moreover, particularly well-looking. But all this ought not to have influenced me as it did, persuaded, as I was, that he was the intended husband of my cousin.

"I affected some surprise at seeing him, apologized for my uncle's absence, (for he happened not to be at home,) called for refreshments, and did all in my power to render myself agreeable to my guest.

"I was soon aware that the young gentleman took me for my cousin, and I resolved to keep him under the delusion as long as circumstances would admit. I saw that, from time to time, he looked at me with a particular interest, and I had some pleasure in thinking that he seemed far from dissatisfied with my appearance. Refreshments were spread before him, but he was too much occupied to partake of them; and, when the servants were withdrawn, he removed from his seat by the table to one on the sofa by me, and, looking me full in the face, (though, in a manner sufficiently respectful,) he spoke of the anxiety he had long felt to see me, adding something highly gratifying to my vanity, relative to the perfect satisfaction he had derived from the sight of me. I passed this over, pretending not to hear all he said, and we fell into an easy discourse on indifferent subjects, in which I flattered myself that I did myself much credit; at least, I plainly saw that I succeeded in interesting my auditor, and was fully aware, that, if my unhappy cousin was out of the way, there would have been no objection made by Mr. Fitzgerald to have taken me in her stead: for, in case of her death, I was the rightful heiress to her father's estates.

"Mr. Fitzgerald and myself had been together for more than two hours, and no explanation had taken place, when my uncle came in from his ride. He wel-

comed the young gentleman with much cordiality, adding, 'I hope that my niece has done the honours of my house in my absence, as she ought to have done.'

"'Your niece, Sir!' said Mr. Fitzgerald, evidently much discomposed, and blushing up to his very forehead.

"'Yes,' returned my uncle. 'Why, who did you take her for?'

"'Your daughter, certainly,' replied the other.

"'My daughter! Why, Matilda, how could you!' said the old gentleman.

"'I was not aware of the mistake,' I replied.

"'But did you not tell Mr. Fitzgerald that poor Agnes is ill?'

"'Mr. Fitzgerald had a book in his hand, which he dropped at that moment, and he leaned down to pick it up. It was natural that his face should be highly flushed after having stooped; notwithstanding which, I had reason to hope, that there was some other cause for this violent glow besides that which was apparent.

"At dinner our party was augmented by a visiter, whose habit it was to sit long over the bottle. I, however, left the dining-room soon after the table-cloth was removed, and, having visited Agnes, who enquired after Mr. Fitzgerald with as little interest as she would have done after any other stranger, I took a turn in the garden, where I had not been many minutes before I was joined by Mr. Fitzgerald, who had made his escape from the dining-parlour. He proposed a walk in the park, having carelessly, though politely, enquired after the health of my cousin.

"It was a lovely afternoon in the beginning of summer, and we prolonged our walk till the sun had set, concluding it with a visit to the mount which faces my closet-window, where we sat down for a while under the shade of yonder elm, whose leaf still flourishes with undiminished verdure, although generations have passed away since first it formed the glory of the forest.

"During our walk nothing particular had passed between me and my companion, although I thought that his manner had been attentive and even tender; but when we were seated, and all the lovely prospect seen from those heights was spread before us, while our

senses were regaled with the odour of thyme and marjoram, and other fragrant herbs; after we had remained silent for a time, he suddenly turned to me, and, taking my hand, said, 'Tell me, fair lady, is your cousin like yourself?'

"'No, Sir,' I replied, 'not in the least. Agnes is fair, and I am, as you see, brown as a nut.'

"'Brown!' said he, 'no;' and he passed some high compliments on my complexion, my hair, and eyes, and again said, 'But does not Agnes resemble you in any one respect?'

"'No, Sir,' I replied, 'I do not presume to resemble Agnes in any thing. Her very delicacy of constitution gives her a beauty, to which I, who am all rude health, cannot aspire.'

"'And how long, my charming Matilda,' he answered, 'how long have you been in the habit of considering sickliness a beauty?' and I thought he sighed.

"I remember little more of this conversation, but it was not interrupted till the old clock in the turret tolled the hour of nine, which, being my uncle's supper-time, we hastened back.

"When we withdrew to rest, our old housekeeper, who had known me from a child, came up to receive some orders from me, and, before she left the room, 'Miss Matilda,' said she, 'that Mr. Fitzgerald is a fine young gentleman, and I am glad of it for my dear young lady's sake.'

"'Your young lady's sake!' I said; 'and what has she to do with Mr. Fitzgerald?'

"'Why, do you not know, Miss,' replied she, 'that this Mr. Fitzgerald has been destined to marry Miss Agnes from her infancy?'

"'What! whether she likes him or not?' I asked.

"'And why should she not like him? I am sure he is a very fine young gentleman.'

"'But, perhaps he may not like her,' I rejoined.

"'Not like her! not like our sweet Miss Agnes!' she exclaimed, lifting up her hands and eyes, and giving me a searching look. 'But, however, Miss, I have told you what has been planned by the old gentlemen on both sides, and now you know it.'

"'What then?' I asked.

"'Why, you will know how to behave to the young gentleman,' she replied.

"'And do you think I did not know that before?' I said.

"'How should you, Miss?' returned the housekeeper. 'If you were not informed that he was bound in honour to another, you might, very innocently, have set your heart upon him; and so I thought, as you have no mother to give you a caution, there could be no harm in my just telling you how matters stand.'

"So saying, she wished me good night, leaving me to my own thoughts, which were, perhaps, never more painful.

"The housekeeper had done her duty, and, in so doing, had set before me all the error of my ways; and it seemed to me, at that moment, as if new light had broken in upon me, shewing the vileness of my intentions in their most prominent point of view. But I was ambitious; and in that one word, *ambition*, all that is hateful, and all that is cruel, mean, and despicable in the human character, is contained. It is in our dealings, not with our inferiors, nor with our equals, but with our superiors, that the passion of ambition is excited.

"The Golden Rule, in all intercourse with our fellow-creatures, is this—to do unto others what we would they should do unto us. But how can this be done? it may be asked. I reply, only on the supposition that our own desires are reasonable, moderate, and just. An ambitious man, an envious man, or a covetous man, can never do to others what he would they should do unto him, because his desires and expectations are immoderate; he would have all his neighbour's wealth or all his honours. The Golden Rule, therefore, can never be attained by him, for his own covetous desires will ever weigh down the scale of Justice to his own side. But, in the degree that he becomes humble and moderate, in that degree he becomes better prepared to fulfil this law of love, and more and more able, as well as ready, to do to others as he would they should do to him, under like circumstances and on like occasions.

"This Golden Rule was exemplified, in the highest perfection, in the man Christ Jesus, who, feeling for us

as for himself in our circumstances, did precisely for us what he would have desired should be done for himself had it been possible that he could have been in our situation. And, in the degree that a Christian approaches nearer and nearer to the example of his Saviour, he is the more enabled to observe the Golden Rule.

"Had my situation and that of my sweet Agnes been reversed, I am fully sensible she would have felt that all had been done for her which she could possibly have required: she would have desired no more, nay, she would have been contented with less. And thus, in weighing her own more moderate desires with her duty to others, she would have found it easy to have balanced the account, and brought her actions down to the rule of Justice.

"I hardly know whether I have expressed myself clearly on this difficult point; but this is the result of what I would say—that he who is most free from ambition, most humble and moderate in his own desires, is the person who can best fulfil the duty of doing to others what he would they should do unto him. And, most assuredly, if this be allowed as a truth, it will serve to remove the supposed insurmountable difficulty of obeying our Lord's injunction.

"I was kept awake several hours by my meditations on what the housekeeper had said to me; and the result of my meditations was this, that I would endeavour to be more cautious in my conduct towards Mr. Fitzgerald, since the eyes of one of the household, at least, were upon me. But I purposed no improvement of character, for I was not the subject of a change of heart.

"It was more than a fortnight after the arrival of Mr. Fitzgerald before my cousin was able to leave her room, and, during that period, I was not wanting to myself, but used every means I could think of to secure his affections, and, in so doing, as might be expected, engaged my own feelings in the cause, in such a way as I had not foreseen, but which was a very proper and natural consequence of my sin. In proportion, however, as my regard for Mr. Fitzgerald increased, my dispositions towards my cousin partook more and more of the feelings of hatred; and such was their nature, that even her excellencies and her kindness towards me, rendered her

more and more the object of my aversion. I particularly envied in her a freedom from those passions which made my life so miserable; but I gave her no credit for this freedom, but, on the contrary, used often to say to myself, that her composure of mind was owing to her singularly happy situation, and to her being in possession of all that could make life desirable. It never occurred to me, that the equanimity of her mind proceeded from piety. She had been nursed by a pious woman, who still continued to live with her in the character of a waiting-maid; and by this simple means she had been brought, through the divine blessing, to seek her God in the days of her youth. Hence proceeded that calmness of mind and sweetness of manner, which rendered her the object of the love and admiration of all who saw her, with the exception only of myself.

"During the time of her confinement to her room, while Mr. Fitzgerald was in the house, I of course frequently visited her in the chamber, and generally found her reading some serious book, or cutting out garments for the poor; but, as I avoided mentioning Mr. Fitzgerald's name, she seldom asked me any questions about him, and it was evident that her thoughts were not occupied concerning him. Her illness, though short, had an alarming tendency; and it appeared, as she afterwards told me, that the impressive views of death and mortality given her at that time, had much loosened her affections from the world, and had operated as a suitable warning to prepare her for an early departure. The time, however, at length arrived, when she was to leave her room; and my uncle, one morning at breakfast, announced to Mr. Fitzgerald, with great glee, that he hoped he should have the pleasure of introducing him to his daughter at dinner. The young gentleman coloured on receiving this information, but I could not exactly interpret this symptom; I was, however, so violently affected, that, as soon as I possibly could, I withdrew to a summer-house, which was built on the wall in a distant part of the garden, and there, for a time, gave free and uninterrupted vent to my tears.

"I endeavoured to suppose that these were tears of sweet and amiable sensibility, when, on the contrary, they were nothing but the effusions of selfishness and

passion. My heart and affections had not been taken by surprise by Mr. Fitzgerald; on the contrary, believing that the parents had intended a marriage between him and my cousin, I had formed the selfish project of disconcerting their plan. And if, in the pursuit of my object, my own feelings were disturbed and injured, it was, as I have before said, no more than might have been expected, and no more than I deserved.

"I continued weeping in the summer-house till I heard some voices near the wall on the outside of the garden. The wall was skirted by a small coppice, which was intersected by several narrow pathways; but these were so seldom frequented, that they were almost overgrown with moss. I had scarcely time to withdraw from the window at which I had sat weeping, with my handkerchief at my eyes, before Mr. Fitzgerald and my uncle appeared.

"My uncle was earnestly engaged in conversation, and did not see me; but not so Mr. Fitzgerald. He perceived me, and, no doubt, remarked my dejected appearance; for, although he took no notice at the time, but passed on with my uncle, in less than a quarter of an hour he returned to the summer-house, by the way of the garden, and entered without ceremony.

"He at first took no notice of my tears, but asking permission to sit down by me, he entered into a conversation, in which he frankly told me, that it was the wish of the parents on both sides that a marriage should take place between him and my cousin; and observed, that as he was entirely dependent on his parents, he had no choice but to submit to their desires. He hinted how much he had been disappointed, when, after our first conversation, he had found that I was not the daughter of his father's friend; and he added, that he could have little hope that he should find in my cousin any qualities which could make him cease to regret his disappointment.

"All this was very fine to the ear, but it was decidedly wrong, and it was what I ought not to have listened to for one moment; but it pleased me, because it flattered my vanity, though, as he had not yet seen my cousin, it could hardly be said to lower her. We were disturbed in this unprofitable discourse by the necessity of appearing at dinner.

"It may be supposed that I was exceedingly anxious to observe the first effect of the appearance of Agnes on Mr. Fitzgerald, thinking that I should be able to read in his countenance, on this occasion, whether I had any thing more to expect from his regard to me. But I found, with dismay, sudden and strong expressions of admiration, on his part, when she appeared; and the artless simplicity and sweetness of her manners seemed every instant to gain increasingly upon him.

"From that moment, he shunned every occasion of being alone with me; and, as there were no prudential obstacles in the way of this marriage, it was hurried on by the parents, and I had the mortification, in a few months, of assisting at it, in the character of bridesmaid.

"It may be supposed that the ill success of my plan with respect to Mr. Fitzgerald, who was the only man in the world for whom I had ever entertained any preference, did not render my feelings towards my cousin, who was become his happy wife, more agreeable than they had been before. In short, I became so uneasy in my own mind, that I rejoiced to receive the addresses of a young officer who was quartered in the next town.

"My uncle behaved very handsomely to me on my marriage, and presented me with six thousand pounds, and my cousin added some very expensive presents.

"As my husband had what is called good interest in the army, we entertained no thought of leaving the course of life he had chosen. We accordingly joined our regiment, and accompanied it into different parts of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

"Although my husband had nothing more than his pay, yet the interest of my fortune enabled us to live in a style quite superior to any other married officer in the regiment. But we were not satisfied with this. Although we had all we could reasonably desire, yet our anxiety for promotion was the same as if our very existence depended on it; and I have often recollected the glee with which my husband would proclaim the death of a superior officer, and how frequently he made 'speedy promotion' his toast.

"All this, which is too frequently practised in the army, is counted but a *façon de parler*, and it is pleaded,

that those who use this language use it without thought, and without the smallest wish to injure a brother officer, or to see him injured. But what does Scripture say on this subject? *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good: and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.* (Luke vi. 45.) And we may judge of the nature and tendency of these speeches, when our dearest friends, our husbands, and sons, are made the subjects of them. Ask what the bereaved mother or widow would feel were she to hear the death of her beloved one made the subject of such jests as these; and could such a one, I ask, be brought to think that there could be any excuse for speeches of such a cruel tendency?

"With regard to myself, if I reproved this kind of language in my husband, it was in such a careless, laughing manner, as rather encouraged than checked him; and, as he knew that I was as eager for promotion as himself, he took no pains to conceal from me his failings of the nature above mentioned.

"But promotion in the army was not the only interesting subject of discourse between myself and my husband: he was continually calculating the chances which I had of coming into my uncle's estate; and in this manner he would often express himself. 'Your uncle is old and paralytic; he has had two strokes already—a third is generally fatal. In case of his death, there is then only one life in your way, and that is your cousin Agnes's. She is not healthy; she always, I have heard you say, was of a consumptive habit.'

"Sometimes I would reply to this, 'She may have children.'

"He would then calculate upon the chance of this, remarking that she had been married two years or more, and had no prospect of the kind. We then, not unfrequently, proceeded to calculate the value of the estate, and to talk ourselves almost into the belief that we had it already in possession.

"Had we entered upon this kind of conversation in a serious manner, we might, perhaps, have been more easily aware of its horrible tendency. But it was always carried on in a gay, rattling style, and in a kind of cant lan-

guage, such as is commonly used by young spendthrifts, and generally over a bottle. My husband was the chief speaker; but, although I did not join with him in the strange expressions which he used, and, indeed, often affected to reprove him, yet he was very well aware that my reproofs did not come from the heart, and, therefore, was not checked by them.

"The first event which seemed to bring me nearer to the desired estate, was the death of my uncle, which my husband announced to me with the utmost *nonchalance*, although he owed to this good man nearly all the comforts of his life.

"This circumstance was soon followed by the less welcome intelligence that Mrs. Fitzgerald was in expectation of an increase to her family. We were then in Ireland; and my husband was evidently in low spirits on the occasion for some weeks.

"The intelligence of the actual birth of the child, with an account of its well-doing and that of its mother, seemed to remove the desired estate to such a distance, that my husband began to murmur at the smallness of my fortune, and to rail at my uncle for not having named me in his will. He now never spoke of my uncle but in terms of disrespect.

"Soon after the birth of little George, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Fitzgerald, our regiment was ordered to England, and I received a kind invitation from my cousin to visit her.

"I found Mr. and Mrs. Fitzgerald in good health, strongly attached to each other, and living in perfect harmony and love. The little boy, whose existence I had so often deplored, was about half a year old, a lovely baby, possessing all that soft and amiable expression of countenance which rendered his mother so pleasing to every one who saw her with an unprejudiced eye.

"The babe was always dressed with that elegant nicety which is so frequently bestowed on a first child, and was the constant delight of his affectionate parents, who, when they had wearied his little tender frame with play, would soothe him to sleep in their arms, and afterwards, laying him on the cushion of the couch, would watch him till he awoke again.

"I can give you no account of my feelings during this

visit, but that they were so wretched, that I did not dare to look into them. After a time, I returned to my husband, and was, soon after my return, followed by a very melancholy letter from my cousin. This letter contained an account of the sudden death of Mr. Fitzgerald, by a fall from his horse, and presented a lively picture of the distress of the afflicted widow.

"While I was yet considering whether this event tended towards the advancement of my prospects of the estate or otherwise, (for all my feelings were now nearly swallowed up by ambition,) my husband came in, and I imparted the news to him. What I only thought upon the subject, he, with less delicacy, spoke, and said, 'Had it been Fitzgerald's wife instead of himself, it would have been a fine thing in your favour, my dear; but as it now stands, the widow may marry again, and then we shall be no nearer than we were before.'

"I had the decency to check him, and said, 'Why, my dear, should we, on this melancholy occasion, be thinking of ourselves?'

"'Because,' said he, 'it is natural so to do;' and he turned on his heel, and went out.

"Whether it was his roughness on the occasion—whether it was a recollection of the former circumstances which had taken place between myself and Mr. Fitzgerald, or the late scenes of happiness I had witnessed, which were now so cruelly and suddenly marred—I know not; but I burst into tears as soon as he was gone, and wept violently for a while, and thus eased my mind for a time with respect to the hardness of heart of which I now began to suspect myself.

"I now pass over, in my narration, some months of my life, till the time when I received a summons from my cousin, (who had always believed me to be her most sincere friend,) begging me to come to her immediately, as her child, her only earthly stay and support, was dangerously ill.

"We were at breakfast when I received the letter, which was couched in terms expressive of the utmost affliction. I handed it over the table to my husband, and watched his countenance while he read it with the deepest attention. His cheeks flushed high as he perused the letter, and when he had finished it, he broke

out with an expression of exultation, and said, 'Upon my word, I believe we shall have it at last!'

"'Have what? my dear,' said I, affecting not to understand him.

"'Why, the estate, my girl! the estate!' he replied, springing from his chair. 'But you must go—you must go, on all accounts.'

"I did not dare to trust my lips with one word in reply, for I was afraid that I should betray my feelings, whether willing or not so to do.

"I was soon prepared to undertake my journey, and, before the middle of the next day, found myself at the gate of the court of my late uncle's house.

"I was ushered in, and invited up stairs to the nursery, where the widowed mother was watching over her afflicted baby. She viewed me with a silent burst of tears, and led me to the side of the cradle.

"The baby was much changed. I have his little image still before me. He was become exceedingly pale; his eyes were half closed; and on his delicate wrist was a black patch, which was laid over a place where a vein had been opened. I saw death marked on his sweet face, and I saw it with a feeling of pleasure. I witnessed the anguish of his widowed mother, and I did not wish the cause removed!

"Here I pause for a moment, to ask if mine was a singular case? Are there more hearts, among those who desire to be exalted in this world, as hard and cruel as mine? Let every ambitious or covetous person ask himself what his feelings would have been on a like occasion; and if his conscience bring him in guilty, let him instantly apply to that Holy Spirit who only is able to cleanse him from those feelings which render man little less than diabolical.

"The baby died, and I assisted to lay out his tender limbs, now cold in death, and to arrange, for the last time, his flaxen curls around his marble brow.

"I strewed the fairest flowers upon his little corpse, and in each dimpled hand I placed a rose; and I did all this without feeling one regret at his early death, or forming one tender wish that it had not been so. I was glad, however, in the bustle of preparation for the funeral, to find some excuse for being absent from the

mother, and was happy to devolve the task of comforting her upon another.

"The pious woman I have before spoken of, who had been my poor cousin's nurse, was still living with her, and she now became her only earthly consolation. I was, however, ostensibly, her best friend, and continued with her till, worn out by sorrow preying on a constitution naturally tender, she died, and left me in possession of that inheritance which I had long so ardently coveted.

"My cousin, I have reason to think, had been enabled, during her illness, to receive all the consolation which religion could give her, and her last address to me convinced me that she died in the most desirable state of mind—that is, with entire confidence in the death and merits of her Saviour.

"My husband was in such haste to take possession of the estate, that he could scarcely wait till the remains of the late owner were laid in the dust, before he began to form plans of alterations and improvements.

"I was now placed in that situation which I had ardently coveted for years. We established ourselves in a great style of magnificence, and our equipages, &c. were unrivalled by any in the country. A continued round of company and visitings occupied all my leisure time, and my husband provided himself with hounds and hunters, and entered most fully into all the delights of the chase.

"In the midst of all our pleasures, a prospect was held forth to me of speedily becoming a mother; an event which only, as I thought, was wanting to complete my felicity.

"In due time my boy was born, and was, at least in his mother's eyes, a very lovely infant. The old nurse, who still lived in the house, paid me the compliment of saying he was very like dear little Master George, who was now no more; and, as he advanced in age, the likeness became more apparent.

"On the day on which my little son was christened, the bells in all the neighbouring churches were set in motion; an ox was roasted whole in the park, and every kind of testimony of rejoicing displayed.

"In the midst of our gaieties, a shabby conveyance was seen driving through the park, from which two females alighted whom I had never seen before. These

persons, who, from their likeness, were evidently mother and daughter, had a thin and meagre appearance, and were not less shabby in their appearance than was the carriage in which they had travelled.

"They soon made themselves known to me as being, with the exception of myself and child, the only surviving descendants of my grandfather, the elder being the daughter who had disgraced herself by a very improper marriage, and the younger the only child of that marriage. I had heard of these persons, and knew that my uncle and Agnes had always assisted them; but, as they were sunk very low in point of property and habits, I had made up my mind not to take any manner of notice of them. However, they came at a propitious moment, and found me in high good-humour; and, as my aunt pretty well understood the art of bending to a haughty spirit, she somehow or other induced me to invite her into the house, where she and her daughter made themselves so useful, and submitted themselves so entirely to all my caprices, that their visit was protracted from day to day, till at length I found I could not do without them, and consented to their remaining under my roof, on condition that they worked as upper-servants, received no wages, and were admitted into the parlour only when we were alone.

"A long continuance of what the world calls prosperity followed the day of my boy's christening, during which period my heart became more and more hardened, and all my feelings of affection centered in myself and my son. As to my husband, my regard for him had never been strong, and having found that he was making to himself a private purse out of my property, I let him know my suspicions, and from that time, though we lived in the same house, we treated each other with a polite and distant coldness. In the mean time, our son grew up, and, notwithstanding the very improper indulgence with which he was treated, and the gross flatteries lavished upon him by his aunt and cousin, he was an amiable young man, and dutiful to both his parents, and I was actually looking out for some young lady for his wife, when he was seized with a disease which, notwithstanding every exertion of human art, at length brought him to the grave in the very bloom of life!

"My son had had a tutor who was a pious man;

and although this tutor had been sent away in disgrace through my caprice, yet the lessons of piety which he had given the youth had sunk so deeply into his heart, that I doubt not they more or less affected every part of his conduct while in health, and, undoubtedly, afforded him much and true comfort in his last hours.

"My beloved son was very near death before I could be induced to believe it probable that I was to lose this darling child. In my calculations on the events of life, it had never entered my head to suppose such an event possible; and when the assurance, that it was not only possible but very probable, burst upon me, I was like one distracted.

"My aunt and cousin came to me to comfort me; but as these persons were the next heirs to the estate, it suddenly occurred to me that they were perhaps secretly rejoicing in an event which was the death-blow of all my hopes. I thought I saw a kind of concealed joy in their sharp faces. I judged of them by what I had experienced in myself; and the horror I felt when they spoke to me, or came near me, is beyond description.

"And now the similarity of circumstances brought to my mind those events of my life which had taken place nearly twenty years before, when I had rejoiced in the death of the only child of my cousin—a cousin with whom I had been reared, and who had always treated me with the utmost tenderness. I remember one night in particular, I had sat on my son's bed, till, overcome with fatigue, I fell asleep, and, in a dream, I thought I was standing by the cradle of little George, and hearkening to his hard and laboured breathing; that his mother, pale as a corpse, and clothed in widow's weeds, stood by, and looked at me with an expression which pierced me to the heart, and was uttering at the same time the most dreadful groans. I awoke in agony, and, raising myself up, found that it was the slow and laboured breathing of my son, the sound of which reaching me in my sleep, had excited the dreadful vision I have just described.

"Every mother who has lost a child must know, that such grief is difficult to bear; but when remorse of conscience, or the remembrance of having injured that child, or the child of another, either in thought, word, or deed,

mixes itself with the natural grief of the occasion, Oh! it is more than human nature can endure.

"'And did I wish the death of Agnes's child?' I said to myself; 'was not such a wish murder? And what could tempt me to so horrible a thought? The estate! the estate!' and I groaned to think how contemptible I felt the estate to be at that moment, and how utterly incapable all my large possessions were of giving me one moment's comfort.

"While I still gazed on the emaciated form of my sleeping son, meditating at the same time on these dreadful recollections, and wondering what new light was breaking in upon me, my aunt, in her night-dress, put her sharp face in at the door, and said, in a whispering tone, addressing the nurse, 'And how is he now?'

"I did not hear the nurse's reply, but the low accents of my aunt in return again met my ear. 'Asleep, you say; well, I am glad: but this heaviness is no good sign, I fear. Nature is wearing out, to be sure.'

"'Nature may be refreshed by sleep,' said the nurse; 'but you had best be going:' and I saw the old woman motioning to her to withdraw. But the signal was not taken, and she stepped further into the room.

"'Heaven help the poor soul!' was her next exclamation. 'How hard he fetches his breath! how he labours! The Lord deliver him from his troubles!'

"I saw the nurse, as I looked through the curtain, motion to her again to leave the room; but the signal was not observed, and she came still forwarder.

"'I must just look at him,' she said, 'the poor dear boy. I wish I could hear him breathe more easy; but I thought him changed yesterday—did not you, nurse?'

"'He is sleeping very easy now,' replied the nurse, 'and you will be sure to disturb him. Pray go back to your bed.'

"'But I hope you watch him,' replied my aunt. 'I have seen many die; and death sometimes comes on when'——

"She was proceeding, when I burst out upon her from behind the curtain, and, putting the worst interpretation on her predictions, believing that she spoke but what she hoped, and remembering but too well at that moment, that it was her interest my child should die,

'Aunt,' I said, 'you may forbear your horrid forebodings. Remember, if my son dies, I may still outlive your daughter; so spare yourself the guilt of wishing my son's death.'

"The old lady was terrified at my sudden appearance and dreadful expressions, and hastened back to her own apartment.

"My son had heard what I said to his aunt, and he thence took occasion to entreat me to seek a superiority over the petty strivings and animosities of this world. He pointed out to me that a better inheritance, eternal in the heavens, was prepared for those who were willing to leave all and follow Christ, and he urged me to take thought for the everlasting welfare of my soul, and to have less concern for the perishable things of this world. His last request to his parents was, that a considerable church-living, in the gift of our family, might be presented to his beloved tutor, in the instance of its becoming vacant.

"My grief for my poor boy was long and violent, and shewed itself in a thousand extraordinary ways. For a while I confined myself entirely to my own apartments, and spent my time, not truly in religious duties, but in a variety of gloomy forms, which I called religious, having a confused notion that the Almighty Ruler of all things was offended with me;—but I had so little understood what my beloved son had said to me upon his death-bed, that I had gathered no correct idea from him of the Saviour. I therefore strove to work out my own salvation by the deeds of the law, in a laborious and fatiguing course of duties, and by a cheerless and austere mode of living—by which I rendered myself and my religion hateful to every one.

"While I was in this state of mind, the incumbent of the parish died, and I then thought of the promise I had made my beloved son. We sent for his venerable tutor, and presented the living to him.

"This excellent man was soon aware of my state, and of the mistake into which I had fallen, of endeavouring to procure justification by the works of the law; and he took great pains to convince me of the spiritual and extensive import of the commandments, and to shew me that no mere man had ever kept the law of God, or ever

could be saved by it. He declared to me the nature of the ten commandments, explaining them one by one, pointing out their purity and spirituality, proving to me that they extended, not only to the outward actions, but to the very thoughts and intents of the heart.

"When we came to the consideration of the sixth precept, I found myself condemned, absolutely condemned before God, as a murderer—an idea which had before arrested my mind, but in a manner so slight, that I had contrived to free myself entirely from the conviction. But soon the persuasion of my guilt occupied my heart with renewed force, accompanied with a sense of that anger which drank up my spirits, and I cried out in agony—'What shall I do to be saved?'

"This was the state of mind which my faithful pastor had been endeavouring to produce in me, and he was ready with an answer to my sincere enquiry—the answer which St. Paul gave to the gaoler—*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* (Acts xvi. 31.)

"I was no sooner brought to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, by the persevering and affectionate labours of my minister, through the power of the Holy Spirit, than I saw the depravity of my character, not only in my breach of the sixth commandment, wherein I had been especially guilty, but in innumerable other instances. Nay, I perceived that I had been, from my earliest infancy, living as without God in the world, and that the description in the Epistle to the Romans was in many points applicable to me. *Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.* (Rom. i. 29—32.)

"Thus was I convinced deeply of sin, while many and painful were the convictions and struggles which I had to pass through, before I could exercise such faith in the Saviour as brought me peace; and when at length I was

enabled to do this, my pastor taught me that it was necessary I should shew the evidences of faith, in all good works. He urged me to seek a hearty reconciliation with my husband, and aunt, and cousin, the latter of whom I had chased from my house in disgust after the death of my son. He was the means of bringing me, also, to a regard for the spiritual and temporal welfare, not only of my relations, but of my servants, and of all those who in any way depended on me, and were influenced by me.

"Twenty years are now passed since my beloved son entered into glory, and more than forty since I followed Agnes and her little George to their graves. My worthy pastor and father in Christ, has also, since that time, been removed from the present evil world, and my husband is now approaching rapidly to the grave. Thus passes away one generation of mankind after another; and among those who have departed, how great is the satisfaction and pleasure in reflecting upon the state and character of such as gave decisive evidence that they were the chosen of the Lord!

"During the last twenty years of my life I have lived in great retirement; and the world has ceased to possess any charm for me. All ambitious desires died away from my heart when I lost my son; and every earthly possession, from that time, seemed to be marked in my view with the characters of mortality. But, during the latter part of that period, ever since I was brought by grace to the reception of my Saviour, the violent passions of pride, envy, and ambition, which had taken up their dwelling in my breast, no longer have exercised the same dominion over me. By gazing on my Saviour, I, who had been wounded unto death by sin, was healed. All within me became calm and serene, and I now more vehemently desired the spiritual life of my connexions than I had ever desired the death of those who stood in the way of my worldly advancement. In the court of Christ there is no rivalry: the riches and honours of his kingdom are inexhaustible; and he that most earnestly desires the exaltation of his brother, will himself be most highly honoured; for our Lord saith, *He that is least among you all, the same shall be greatest.*

"It has pleased the Lord to impart his Spirit to my

husband and other relations, and thus abundantly to pour out his salvation upon his servants, who were unworthy of the least of all his mercies.

"During the retirement of my chamber, to which I have been confined for some months past by sickness, I have taken a review of my life, and have been led to consider that there are many events in it, which, if properly stated, might be useful in warning others as to the dreadful effects of ambitious feelings.

"The tendency of these, is, undoubtedly, neither more nor less than to murder; while the feelings of humility lead to life, health, and peace. Perhaps it would be impossible to sum up the total of human wisdom in a smaller compass than to say, that it consists in that pious acquiescence in the will of God which induces a man to keep in his own proper station, and there to avail himself of every opportunity of testifying his reverence towards God and his love of his fellow-creatures.

"Varieties of rank, and station, and outward circumstances, are ordained of God in the present state; but true honour consists not, necessarily, or independent of true virtue, in any of them. He that does his duty best, be it in a palace or be it in a cottage, is, undoubtedly, the most honourable character; and he that conforms to circumstances with the most humility, is, undoubtedly, the most dignified person. There is a meanness, a littleness, a poorness in ambition, of which even the subject of it himself is conscious, though he would not have it known—for who would not blush to acknowledge those feelings of covetousness and envy, of which this passion is composed?—who dares to avow them openly, or to reveal them even to his bosom friend? Is not envy ever accompanied by shame? And who would not prefer the reputation of rising above such covetous and envious passions, to the gain, the polluted gain, of ambition?

"But the divine will say, that such evils of the heart cannot be overcome by reflections or reasonings of this kind. I grant it. Nevertheless, it is a desirable thing to understand the real nature of ambition, that restless and guilty feeling, which has hitherto supplied a theme to every heathen writer, and which is extolled by some professing Christians, while it has been clothed by genius in the most brilliant robes which fancy could devise:

for until we are brought to know the mischief of such feelings—until we know the deep depravity of this state of mind, which the world too much approves—we shall not be disposed to seek the only remedy for our moral defects; that remedy which is found no where but in religion, and in no religion but in that of the Scriptures, where the love of the Father, the death and merits of the Son, and the sanctifying influences of the Spirit, are exhibited with attractions as various as they are wonderful, and by representations as beautiful and familiar as the flowers which enamel the meadows, and the fountains, groves, and valleys, which diversify the face of Nature.

"O how blessed was I when the glorious scheme of human redemption was unfolded to my mind! when I was endued with the power of discerning spiritual things! It was *then* I awoke as from a dream, and wondered at the hopes, the fears, and the desires which had hitherto occupied my mind, and filled every faculty. Then, indeed, was my house swept and garnished, but not left empty, to the reception of a worse spirit than that which had occupied it before; for love, and joy, and hope, were now admitted there, and for ambition and covetousness, envy and rancour, there was no room. Those benevolent persons, therefore, who are anxious to remove the authority of such tormenting passions from the minds of others, must present to them superior objects for their affections. It is useless to say, 'Love not the world nor the things of the world,' to him who knows nothing beyond the world. The warm affections of the heart must have an object. The infant who grasps a toy may be tempted to relinquish it by the prospect of seizing some more grateful possession; but if you remove the object of his delight without affording him gratification in another, you exasperate him to his own injury, and he will extend his hand to seize whatever may next come in his way.

"To young people, therefore, my reader, busy yourself not in condemning the world, or that which belongs to it, but endeavour to draw their attention and excite their affections towards the objects which are beyond this present state of things: fill their hearts as much as in you lies, with hopes respecting future and eternal realities. Spread before them the types and emblems

of things to come. Unfold the volume of Nature before them, and teach them to read the language of the heavens—for *the heavens declare the glory of God:* and if you can (with the divine blessing) bring them to love and to desire those things which are above, you will have afforded them the best protection from those low and envious, covetous and ambitious feelings, which render man impatient towards his inferiors, unkind to his equals, and meanly servile or cruelly envious towards his superiors.

"And now, my reader, I take my leave, having accomplished the design of setting before you my history. May the effect be, to urge myself and you to press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus!"

The history of Matilda Vincent being concluded, the lady of the manor requested her young people to join her in prayer.

*A Prayer that we may be liberated from all envious, ambitious, and covetous Desires of the Heart.*

"O THOU eternal and mysterious Three in One, thou blessed and glorious Lord God, we entreat thy mercy and pity on account of our many transgressions, and those peculiar sins of our vile nature which lead us to look enviously on the advantages enjoyed by our fellow-creatures.

"Give us, O blessed God, an impressive sense of the emptiness of worldly possessions, and impart that faith which may enable us to look beyond the present life to that blessed state in which there will be no poverty, no tears, no biting scorn, no pride or envy; and where the Lord's flock shall feed in a wide pasture, and enjoy for ever their resting-places.

"We know, O Lord God, that we cannot free our hearts from improper worldly considerations, unless thou, in thine infinite mercy, shouldst condescend to fill them with better things, and to excite our affections towards those which are above. To this end, O Almighty Father, grant unto us a clear and saving view of all that thou hast done and prepared for us. Lead us

to perceive how thou, O Father, didst purpose our salvation ere yet the world began, making us the objects of thy electing love ere we inhabited the earth, how thou didst provide for our justification through thy Son, and how thou suppliest us with the means of regeneration and sanctification through the gift of thy Spirit.

"Deign, O Lord, to explain to us thy promises of future happiness; not those only which refer to the latter times, when the primeval glory of creation shall be renewed, and the triumphant reign of Christ shall commence, but also in that more remote period when the heavens and the earth shall pass away, and there shall be no more sun. And grant that the view of these dazzling glories may make the glimmering splendours of the present scene pass from our view, and retire into the darkness in which they must all presently be involved. And thus, O Almighty God, now, even now at this present time, make us more than victorious over all worldly passions and earthly desires; so that, while present in the body, we may yet be present with the Lord, living by faith and not by sight, and ever ready to depart with joy when our appointed hour may come.

"And now to Thee, O everlasting Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all praise, honour, and glory, from this time forth for evermore. Amen."

# CHAPTER XXVII.

CATECHIST. My good Child, know this, that thou art not able to do these Things of thyself, nor to walk in the Commandments of God, and to serve him, without his special Grace, which thou must learn at all Times to call for by diligent Prayer. Let me hear, therefore, if thou canst say the Lord's Prayer.

A. Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this Day our daily Bread. And forgive us our Trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil. Amen.

Q. What desirest thou of God in this Prayer?

A. I desire my Lord God our heavenly Father, who is the Giver of all Goodness, to send his Grace unto me, and to all People, that we may worship him, serve him, and obey him, as we ought to do. And I pray unto God, that he will send us all Things that be needful both for our Souls and Bodies; and that he will be merciful unto us, and forgive us our Sins; and that it will please him to save and defend us in all Dangers ghostly and bodily; and that he will keep us from all Sin and Wickedness, and from our ghostly Enemy, and from everlasting Death. And this I trust he will do of his Mercy and Goodness, through our Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore I say, Amen, So be it.

MANY and happy had been the meetings between the lady of the manor and her young people; and the young party began to look forward with apprehension to the time when the cause for these frequent and delightful interviews should cease to operate. The bishop was ex-

pected to pay his visit early in the autumn, and the lady of the manor also expected her sons and their tutor to return about the same time: but while the affectionate mother anticipated with delight a reunion with her beloved children, she felt some regret at the idea that she should not then be able to give so much of her attention as she had lately done to the beloved young people who had for some months past occupied so much of her time and so many of her thoughts. But the recollection that her labours with respect to them were now approaching towards their termination only animated her zeal, and rendered her the more anxious to perform her task effectually.

The part of the Catechism to which the lady of the manor had brought her young people was that which treats on prayer; and accordingly, when the party assembled again, she caused one of the young ladies to repeat the following questions and answers.

"*Catechist.* My good child, know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor to walk in the commandments of God, and to serve him, without his special grace, which thou must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer. Let me hear, therefore, if thou canst say the Lord's Prayer."

"*A.* Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen."

"*Q.* What desirest thou of God in this prayer?"

"*A.* I desire my Lord God our heavenly Father, who is the giver of all goodness, to send his grace unto me, and to all people, that we may worship him, serve him, and obey him, as we ought to do. And I pray unto God, that he will send us all things that be needful both for our souls and bodies; and that he will be merciful unto us, and forgive us our sins; and that it will please him to save and defend us in all dangers ghostly and bodily; and that he will keep us from all sin and wickedness, and from our ghostly enemy, and from everlasting death. And this I trust he will do of his mercy and goodness, through our Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore I say, Amen, So be it."

"My dear young people," said the lady, after having hearkened to this repetition, "I trust that it is not now necessary to use many arguments to prove to you that you are utterly helpless and dependent on God, and that you are of yourselves incapable of doing any thing well, or even so much as desiring to do well, without divine help."

All present replied, that they at least understood that the helplessness of fallen man was a doctrine not to be controverted, though they were by no means so sufficiently impressed by a sense of this truth as they ought to be: "for we all, at times, feel proud and self-confident," they added, "and are always very ready to take to ourselves any kind of praise or flattery which those who do not know us will bestow upon us."

The lady of the manor smiled, and advised them to remember good Mr. Eliot, and shun the voice of human praise; "which," added she, "is far more dangerous than that of the syrens of ancient fable." She then proceeded to the consideration of prayer in general, with its nature and obligations.

"Prayer," said the lady of the manor, "has always been misunderstood, not only by the heathens, of whom our Lord said, *They think that they shall be heard for their much speaking*, (Matt. vi. 7,) and by those who only bear the name of Christians, but also by many really excellent persons among the children of God, who load the duty of prayer with so many formalities, and so many painful circumstances, that they frighten some entirely from it, and drive others to it in a spirit of superstitious terror, which is very far from the temper of the child who feels he is addressing a wise, a holy, and a tender parent.

"In speaking of prayer, and recommending the duty, many things ought to be considered; and one of these is, that all persons are not capable of a long and deep attention to any one subject, which those who insist on very protracted attention to this duty seem to require. The human mind, in different individuals, varies also in the quickness of its conceptions, and the most active minds are perhaps the least disposed of all others to dwell on any single object for a length of time. The mind of youth, in general, is exceedingly rapid and vague in its motions: hence, those persons who, contrary to the ad-

vice of our blessed Saviour, would weary young people by very long prayers, betray their ignorance of the human mind, and either excite a rebellious spirit in their children on the subject of their religious duties, or accustom them (which is perhaps still worse) to a hypocritical habit of praying with the lips while the heart is otherwise engaged."

"O, Madam!" said one of the young ladies, "how much, by these remarks, you have relieved my mind! There is nothing which I have lately been so troubled about as upon the disinclination I feel for long prayers. I used to think, that, when I began to love our Saviour, —and I think I do begin to love him, though not as he deserves to be loved,—I should never think any prayers long, that I should never be tired of hearing sermons, and that my thoughts would never wander during divine service—But, alas! I have been cruelly disappointed."

"Your mistake," said the lady of the manor, "my dear child, was a natural one, and arose from that confusion which exists in the minds of most persons, respecting the difference between regeneration and sanctification. Granting, for argument's sake, that you are regenerate, still your sanctification, though begun, is not complete; too many sinful inclinations, not only of the spirit, but of the flesh, still remain with you, connected with bodily and mental weakness, which render it impossible for the soul to take long and continued flights amid the regions of spiritual things.

"This incapability of a continued enjoyment of high devotional duties, is one of the circumstances most to be deplored by the saints on earth; and this evil can only be relieved by an endeavour (with the divine help) to keep the mind in such a frame, as that it may be ever prepared to raise itself to God, in short ejaculations, or in holy meditation. In the same Scriptures where we are told not to make long prayers, we are also admonished to pray without ceasing: hence, we should be prepared to direct our hearts to God as a little child turns its eyes to its mother ere yet the tongue has learned to frame the first word of recognition. This is the disposition which our Saviour loves, the childlike simple spirit so precious in his sight. He loves a heart that glows with gratitude to him on an occasion of joy however small, and confesses its sorrow and contrition on the slightest deviation from

the right way—a heart sanctified by himself, and which continually acknowledges its connexion with him, and dependence upon him, which sighs to be delivered from the bondage of sin, and looks only for perfect bliss in the enjoyment of his presence through an endless state of being.

"Such a spirit as I have described," said the lady of the manor, "is ever rising upward, as the sweet incense which burnt on the golden altar in the court of the tabernacle, and being presented on that altar which Christ by his merit has provided, becomes a sweet and acceptable offering before the throne of the Almighty.

"But while this more latent prayer and thanksgiving should be continual," said the lady of the manor, "still the outward forms of prayer should by no means be neglected; and because the cares of this world are ever pressing upon us in this state of being, and the mind may be injured and depressed by them, it is necessary that every child of God should prescribe to himself certain seasons for private devotion, and for family prayer, and that he should also conform to the rules of his own peculiar Church in public worship; and he ought to consider it as one of the greatest privileges afforded him, that he is permitted to approach his God, without fear, through the merits of a dying Saviour.

"If I adopt a poor child, and grant it permission of access to me at any and every moment with its little complaints, I am justly offended if that child, when under trouble, pines in secret, and refuses to open its heart to me; and yet, my dear young people, how little do we feel the privilege of being admitted into the presence of God, what a burden do we think it to be obliged to devote even the shortest period to this duty, and how ready are we to be diverted from it by the most unimportant avocation! Ah, Lord God, how infinitely sinful are we in this particular! surely if one part of our conduct and feelings is more hateful than another, I should say that it is this perpetual disinclination to prayer."

The lady of the manor here paused a moment, and the young people looked down, every one feeling herself self-condemned in this matter, as, no doubt, every one will do who may hereafter honour this little volume with his attention. The lady, however, did not enlarge upon

this part of her subject, but proceeded to observe, that prayer was not a mere uttering of so many words by the lips, but a spiritual intercourse with the Lord Jehovah, graciously permitted by Him in love to his sinful creatures, through the merits of Christ our Saviour; while the subjects of this spiritual intercourse are as numerous as the wants of human nature, and as various as its hopes and fears, its joys and sorrows.

The lady of the manor then proceeded to point out some of those texts of Scripture which enforce the duty of prayer:—*Ask, and it shall be given you.* (Matt. vii. 7.) *And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.* (Luke xviii. 1.) *I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands.* (1 Tim. ii. 8.) And having so done, she went on to make some comments on the model of prayer left us by our blessed Saviour. "Not only by this prayer," she added, "are we taught what we must desire, but we receive an assurance that all we ask therein shall be granted to us; for even a wise and good earthly parent would never put a petition into the mouth of a child, which he did not mean to answer; hence, whole volumes on this beautiful prayer could not, in my opinion, unfold its meaning so clearly and so touchingly, as by justly supposing the answer to each petition given by the Almighty himself, in the very words of the prayer."

"And how could this be done, Madam?" said the young ladies.

"Nearly to this effect, my dear children," replied the lady of the manor. "My children, who dwell on earth, my name shall be hallowed, my kingdom shall come, my will shall be done on earth as in heaven. I will give you day by day your spiritual nourishment. As you, through Christ, have forgiven all those who have offended you, so will I forgive you. I will free you from every temptation. I will deliver you from all evil. For mine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

When the lady of the manor ceased to speak, the young people, with one accord, expressed their delight at the very powerful impression which this mode of explaining the Lord's Prayer made upon their minds.—"This prayer," said Miss Emmeline, "now appears to

me to be an assemblage of the sweetest promises and assurances. I fancied," she added, "while you were speaking, Ma'am, that all the glories of the latter times were unfolded to me, that I was already in the visible presence of my Saviour, and that he was calling me his child, and shewing me all he had prepared for my happiness. O that these delightful feelings might return whenever I hear this prayer! but, alas, I fear that it will not be so, my heart is so hard, and my mind at times so dull and worldly." Some other remarks were made to the same purpose, after which, the lady of the manor made the following observation:—"I have always avoided, my dear young people, dwelling too long on that kind of discussion which might weary you, and for this forbearance, I have lately been repaid by the attention you have always given to those parts of my discourse, or of the stories which I have related or read, that have been more serious than others. At the same time, my acquaintance with the nature of the youthful mind urges me to avail myself gladly of the pattern of Scripture, wherein precept is united continually with example, and where parables and allegories are frequently used, as the means of conveying the most sacred and solemn truths to the mind of man.

"I shall therefore now select a little narrative, from several which I have by me, illustrative of certain passages in the Lord's Prayer, and wherein the dreadful consequences of a captious and unforgiving temper, are shewn forth in a strong, though, alas! not by any means in an exaggerated point of view; for who can calculate the number of direful evils which have desolated the human race, by the prevalence of that spirit which leads to a resistance of trivial offences, and allows the smallest matters to excite angry and revengeful feelings?

"The purport of this little tale is, to mark the growth of hatred in the heart from its first rise till its consummation, and to shew how much of our happiness and well-being depend upon our being able, not only to forgive the gross offender and the flagrant trespasser upon our rights, but to repress all those minor feelings of irritability which we are less guarded against, because we are less aware of their tendency, than of those of a stronger and more dreadful nature."

The lady of the manor then produced a manuscript, and read as follows.

## AGNACE ROQUEFORT, OR THE GROWTH OF HATRED.

"It is now many years since I became an alien from society, and ceased to occupy myself with the world and its fluctuating concerns. My reasons for seeking such retirement will hereafter appear: it was in a moment of disgust and horror, in a time of overwhelming grief and disappointment, and at a season when my society was no longer sought by my own family, that I took those steps which separated me for ever from the busy world. But I have little doubt that, as time softened my afflicted feelings, the world would have again obtained its influence over my heart, had it not pleased the Ruler of all the earth to compel me, by severe corporeal sufferings, to continue in that state of seclusion which I had first chosen in a spirit, I doubt not, of rebellion against the Divine will.

"These sufferings were protracted, and my spirit rose so impiously against them, that I not unfrequently was tempted to ask, 'Wherein have I offended so much as to deserve these afflictions? is not God unjust? has he a pleasure in the miseries of his creatures?'

"Though born in France, I am of the Reformed Church, and to me, therefore, the Holy Scriptures were allowed, and it was for me a blessed occasion, when I was led by my domestic chaplain, to seek a reason for my sufferings, and to know the design of God, by some passages in the Lamentations of Jeremiah: *For the Lord will not cast off for ever: but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.* (Lam. iii. 31—33.)

"It was by these tender and affecting truths that the first dawn of light broke in upon my benighted soul, and I was led to discover that all my afflictions, with the exception only of those lightest of all, the mere infirmities of the body, had sprung from the neglect and breach of this divine petition and injunction contained in the Lord's Prayer,—'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.' And now I was convinced, that

had I made the Bible my guide, and permitted the words of Christ to sink, as they ought to have done, into my heart, I had avoided those inexpressibly bitter circumstances which have shed a dreadful gloom over the latter years of my life.

"O that the words of Solomon were written on every heart, that they were graven as on a rock! *The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water; therefore leave off contention before it be meddled with.—A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes.* (Prov. xvii. 14. xviii. 6.)

"But enough of this. Let me now proceed to the task which I have appointed myself, and if the warnings contained in these disastrous memoirs should prove in any degree advantageous to those into whose hands they may hereafter fall, and more especially to him to whom this manuscript shall be my last bequest, I shall have reason to praise that Being, who out of evil knows how to extract the greatest good.

"And let him who questions this power of the Almighty to overrule evil, look to the general history of man, and especially meditate on the mighty work of redeeming love, by which the malice of Satan was made the means of displaying the divine attributes of mercy and truth, in a point of view, in which otherwise they never could have been thus displayed, at least, in any way that we could conceive. But not to enlarge on this subject, which is, without doubt, the most important that can occupy the mind of man, I proceed immediately to my history.

"I was born in a valley of the Pyrenees, not very distant from the ancient city of Bigorre, now called Tarbes. The situation of this city, in a temperate climate, under a pure sky, in the midst of a fertile plain, watered by two rivers, and partially encompassed by a chain of the Pyrenees, is one of the most beautiful in the earth.

"Some of the delightful circumstances of this town, are the streams of pure water, which, pouring through the streets, convey a pleasing freshness, and contribute to health.

"Not very far from Tarbes, one of the tributary streams of the Garonne descends from the mountains into the champaign country, with a precipitancy and deafening

force that seem to threaten destruction to the little thatched cottages which occupy the shelving sides of the rock on either side of the cataract, and the mighty masses of forest trees whose roots seem to be grappling with the broken masses of stone, for ever threatening to fall together from their aërial heights as the Rock and the Elephant of oriental fable.

"But this stream, having reached the valley, loses its turbulent character, and winds its way in a line with the chain of the hills from whence it derived its source, and then turning more towards the north, hastens to disembogue itself into the Garonne. Not very far from this cataract, and still within the sound of its fall, is a narrow defile of the mountains, a pass which, in the more savage days of yore, led to a haunt of freebooters. Far among the mountains, and directly opposite to the gorge, is a ford of the river, which, though so lately little else than a mountain stream, has acquired a depth which renders it impassable in any other place than this ford. The place was therefore important, and my ancestors, who were possessed of a very large domain on the south of this stream, erected a castle many ages back, between the gorge and the ford: and thus, any enemy approaching either the one way or the other, might be reached from the battlements; and as these parties seldom came in large or orderly bodies, the very sight of the castle was generally sufficient to insure their quiet behaviour.

"This castle of which I speak, resembled, as to its architecture, many of those edifices which we see represented in old tapestry, through whose wide portals the knights and esquires of ancient story are sallying forth on their prancing coursers in quest of new adventures, while the fair ladies and their damsels appear in the high galleries above, waving their handkerchiefs in the view of those who are departing: in these representations, as in the castle of my father, the mixture of the Gothic and Saracen architecture having the effect of carrying the imagination back to those heroic days, when in the field of Roncevalles the Paladins of France met hand to hand with the descendants of the illustrious house of the Ommiadæ.

"Such was my father's castle and my birth-place; and though the days of civil feuds were then nearly

passed away, yet much of feudal magnificence was retained within our walls, and such was the number of my father's retainers, that, wide and extensive as the castle was, few parts were left unoccupied.

"It is now many years since I visited this place of my nativity, this seat of early, I would I could say of happy, youth; and yet my youth was comparatively happy, comparatively peaceful: for I remember with a lively and abiding pleasure the charming scenes which encircled my father's castle.

"O! who can have seen the Pyrenees, who can have wandered among their charming valleys or climbed their meanest summits, without retaining a lasting impression of delight and admiration whenever memory brings back those charming scenes? Where else on the face of the earth are the poetic images of Arcadia so perfectly realized, or, to rise in my comparison, where could we find a more glowing picture of the renewal of nature in the latter days, as predicted by the inspired poets? Where can the traveller find such variety of enchanting objects, such gentle undulations of the surface, amidst flowery meadows and breezy heights, interspersed as they are with little cottages shaded by clusters of the fairest trees? Where shall we find in any other part of the world, such innumerable little hills giving rise to so many sources of clear water which fall in cascades, pouring through grottos of marble wrought by their continual dripping, and flanked by such lofty heights, seeming to float above the clouds?

"Never, never indeed, can I forget the impressions made in early life, by the charming scenery which presented itself wherever I turned my eyes: but whatever the philosopher may pretend, the admiration of nature and the love of God are not the same, for I was an admirer of nature when God was not in all my thoughts.

"I have mentioned above, that immediately opposite the Castle of Roquefort (for my father took his title of marquis from certain lands denominated Roquefort, at the foot of the higher Pyrenees) was a ford; now on the other side of this ford was a beautiful farm, which for many years past had been occupied by one family, who had become rich, like the patriarch Abraham, in flocks and herds, cattle and corn. The house itself was imme-

diately on the opposite bank of the river; and, beyond it, spread the fields of its opulent owner, white with flocks, and gay with fields of corn, orchards, and pasture-grounds. The farm-house was a respectable mansion, built with timber and lath and plaster. It fronted the water; and a balcony, which was extended before all the windows of the upper story, faced directly towards the castle, and at so small a distance from that range of apartments occupied by me when a child, that I could see all that passed in this balcony or open gallery almost as distinctly as if it had been in my own chamber.

"My father married early. His first lady, who was my mother, was the daughter of a noble family in Pau. She was of the Reformed Church, as was my father, and as many of the nobility of the southern provinces of France still are. Her name, which I inherit, was Constance, and she was a woman of superior accomplishments; but I have no recollection of her whatever, as she died when I was only a few months old.

"My mother loved expence, though she brought a small dowry; hence, she left my father in such circumstances, as to render it desirable, if he married again, that he should choose a woman of fortune. And as his honours, and the larger part of his estate, were entailed on the male heir, it was also equally desirable that he should have a son.

"At this time, it happened that Farmer Anselm de Xerés (for such was the name of our opposite neighbour) had an only child, a daughter, whose beauty and sweetness of manner were spoken of far and near. The riches, too, of her father had also been justly appreciated; and, in consequence, my only parent, though Marquis de Roquefort, was tempted to overlook the difference of birth, and to seek the hand of the beautiful peasant. It was not to be expected that he should sue in vain; and, accordingly, before I was a year old, he had married a second time, and Blanche, the daughter of the Farmer Anselm, was become my stepmother.

"I have no recollections of this lady but what are pleasing. Her countenance was lovely, and her voice inexpressibly sweet. She never seemed to pride herself on her elevation, but always sought retirement, and spent most of her time in working embroidery, in a

chamber which looked towards her paternal mansion, being surrounded by her maidens, some of whom she constantly employed in reading to her.

"My stepmother had one daughter only, who was born a year after her parents' marriage, and was, of course, only two years younger than myself. She was called Eglantine, from the fact of these flowers being in blossom at her birth; and as, from that time, there was no prospect of any addition to the family, my father adopted his younger brother's son, who was an orphan, and some years older than myself, with a view to my becoming his wife in due season.

"These arrangements being made, my father seemed at ease with respect to his children, as Eglantine was richly endowed with her mother's fortune.

"In the mean time, while Eglantine was educated by her mother, I was placed under the particular charge of my aunt by my mother's side, who was a widow, and in narrow circumstances. This lady lived in the castle, where a suite of apartments and a suitable establishment were appropriated to her and to me; and as she was an accomplished woman, she certainly omitted no endeavour to render me equally so.

"Such were the circumstances of our family during the early periods of my life; and the only variation of the scene which we experienced was, when visiters arrived at the castle, or when we were permitted to visit Anselm de Xerés, to be present at the feasts of the harvest or the vintage, or to go to the cottages of some of the old servants of the castle, many of whom were established around us in neat and lovely cottages, scattered amid the valleys on our own side of the river.

"I saw less of Eglantine during our early life than might be expected, as she was constantly with her mother, and I with my aunt; but I often met with Xavier, my cousin, who was educated by my father's chaplain: and the effect of these frequent meetings was, that we neither hated nor loved each other, but grew up with a sort of indifference, which never at any time kindled into a warmer feeling, though it at length changed into one of more decided aversion.

"Xavier was naturally a rough character. With a female companion of another temperament, he might

perhaps have been softened, for the roughest men are not unfrequently most alive to the influence of female tenderness; but I am conscious that I was not the woman fitted for him, and certainly not the one he would have chosen had his choice been free—but I am now anticipating.

"I was early taught to look on my sister as my inferior, and to consider that my father had degraded himself by his connexion with her mother; but this feeling of contempt, though deep, was not such as ever affected my conduct in early youth, indeed, I scarcely know that I was aware of it myself: it, however, prevented me from envying, or even observing, the superior attractions of my younger sister, who was, without doubt, as lovely a little creature as ever appeared in this world of imperfection. She united all the simplicity generally attributed to the peasant with the grace and dignity of the polished female. Her person was beautiful, and her calm and innocent countenance was capable of being illumined with the sweetest smiles I ever saw—such smiles as indicated the most delightful vivacity, and an unalterable gentleness united with a highly cultivated intellect. Her character was particularly artless. She thought no evil, and mistook the courtesies due to her as the daughter of the lord of the land as so many indications of real friendship and esteem. She was, therefore, little fitted for grappling with the pride and envy of her fellow-creatures, and, as it afterwards appeared, was sometimes led to do things by which she incurred censure, though, by the divine mercy, she was preserved from that corruption which is often the consequence of indiscretion in smaller matters. But want of discretion is too severe a word to use in this place, though I have looked in vain for one more appropriate: perhaps unguardedness, that sort of unguardedness which consists in supposing all around one to be well-intentioned, would be more descriptive.

"In short, my sister Eglantine was a lovely character: —humble, without meanness; lively, without boldness; gentle, without weakness; and generally dignified, without pride. Can we then suppose that she was only in name of the Reformed Church? No; I believe that the pious lessons of her mother had, with the divine blessing, wrought that change on her heart which such lessons seldom fail of producing.

"But although I saw less of Eglantine than might be supposed, yet we had some mutual enjoyments, and were sometimes permitted to ramble together among the hills. It happened that we had been both nursed by the same person. This excellent woman, whom we called Marguerite, lived in one of the most beautiful cottages, in a glen of the mountains, that I ever did or shall see. To visit Marguerite, and spend a day with her, was the greatest delight we could experience; and this pleasure was generally allowed us three or four times a year. Marguerite lived with her old husband and her son, which last was my foster brother. She kept two cows and a few sheep on the fragrant pasture which surrounded her cottage.

"The golden age seemed to have returned in the charming environs of this humble dwelling; for indeed, as far as the eye could extend its vision, nothing appeared but what might have suited that delightful period. Here were numerous little glens, shaded with trees, in the cool recesses of which sparkled the purest rivulets; flowers innumerable, of every shade, and emitting every variety of perfume, were scattered over this charming region; and though the shepherds, which fed their flocks on these balmy uplands, were, in fact, little resembling them of whom the poet said,

'Their words were simple, and their souls sincere,'

yet many of them had fine dark countenances, and as they were accustomed to amuse themselves with a kind of flute, it needed only a little indulgence of the imagination to complete the scene.

"I often visited my nurse in company with my sister, and particularly at those periods when the hills abounded with wild strawberries; but of all those visits, I remember one only with distinctness, and that, I suppose, took place when I was about ten years of age.

"It happened that some little occasion of disagreement had arisen between myself and my sister. We had been gathering flowers, and were making garlands, as we sat on the door-sill of the cottage. Our heap of flowers lay before us on the turf. From this heap we were selecting for our garlands; and, while I was musing upon other things, my sister adopted all the best, and left me the refuse. This was certainly an encroachment upon my

privilege; for we were to be equal sharers in the flowers. It was therefore a trespass, and I was never disposed to put up with trespasses, however slight. My spirit rose immediately in high disdain: I threw away the garland I had commenced, and ran crying to my nurse, who was occupied with her knitting within the cottage.

"Marguerite was of the Reformed Church, and had long been a reader of the Bible: and by this means had become a very superior woman for her situation in life. She heard my complaint, she called my sister, and required her to make restitution.

"'O but, nurse,' she replied, 'I cannot: the flowers are wrought into my lovely garland, and it is for mamma.'

"'But you have done wrong,' said the nurse: 'you have taken more of the flowers than were your just due. Here,' said she, 'are all the roses, the eglantines, and the white thorn, and you have not left any for your sister.'

"The little girl was immediately convinced of her delinquency, and, with a lovely smile, (for I remember it now,) she expressed her sorrow, and offered me her garland.

"I pushed aside the dimpled hand that held the garland to me. I did more: I seized the garland, and in anger threw it on the little fire which the nurse had lighted for warming the coffee, with which she was about to regale us. In a moment the glossy petals of each flower were shrivelled and blackened in the smoke, and their beauty passed away for ever. Eglantine looked for a moment on the destruction of her work, and then, bursting into tears, she concealed her face on the bosom of her nurse. I well remember the moment: the good Marguerite passed one arm round the waist of the little girl, and, extending the other towards me, she reproved me with considerable displeasure, at the same time inviting me to draw near, and be reconciled with my sister. I, however, remained stubbornly fixed in the place where I was standing, till she caught my arm, drew me to her, and then, embracing us both, addressed me in a very serious manner upon the nature of the disposition I had evinced.

"This excellent woman had often taught me to pray; and it was then that she took occasion to explain to me

that clause in the Lord's Prayer—'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.' She represented to me, that the heart of the natural man, so powerfully inclined to sin, is incapable of that clemency which leads to the forgiveness of an injury. 'The unconverted man,' said she, 'may forget an offence, may also cease to feel its smart, or he may be influenced by another and a stronger feeling, which may lead him from the pursuit of revenge. This is the utmost the natural man can do; but he cannot forgive: for mercy is an attribute of pure and undefiled religion; it is a quality or principle of action bestowed only by grace, and is never possessed in any perfection but by those persons who, having been justified by Christ, are reconciled to the Father, and are at peace in their own minds. Thus we perceive the force of the prayer; and thus do we apprehend that our own forgiveness, and our forgiveness of others, are so connected, that the one is like the root, and the other the fruit, of the self-same tree.'

"I do not pretend to give the exact words which my nurse used on this occasion; but whatever words she might select, she undoubtedly contrived to convey the sentiment above expressed to my mind, to which she added some further remarks, which I also remember, but which, alas, have profited me little through life. She pointed out to me how it must happen that little offences will be given by one person to another in this world, and how much better and amiable it is to pass over these offences, than to render them of importance by resentment; repeating the words of the wise man, to shew from whence this resentment springs; *Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom;* (Prov. xiii. 10;) and reminding me, how, in the present instance, from the smallest matter fierce anger had arisen between two children, brought up on the same knees, and fostered on the same breast. This scene concluded by a gush of tears from every eye, and the cordial reconciliation of all parties.

"And here I must pause, to make a few remarks respecting the propensity of human nature to take offence on trivial occasions. A word, a look, the neglect of a salutation, a smile out of place, have often produced a shyness among the dearest friends; and the very same

persons who, from Christian principles, would not dare to revenge themselves on a declared enemy, allow themselves to nourish uncharitable feelings, perhaps for years together, against an individual of their own families or their nearest neighbour! *These things ought not so to be.* (James iii. 10.)

"I recollect but few other scenes which passed in my infant days, worthy of record. When Xavier was fifteen years of age, he was enrolled in the army; and the same year my aunt died suddenly: on account of which my father took me to Paris, where he placed me as a pensioner in a Protestant school, to be perfected in those accomplishments which have long been thought indispensable to the lady of quality.

"It would have been well if I had learned nothing else but how to embroider flowers and play on the harp in this situation. But, alas! the society into which I was introduced in this school was corrupt in the extreme; and it was there that I formed a connexion which has shed its baneful influence over my whole life. This connexion was with a young woman, named Florence de Castres, who was some years older than myself, and who was one of those needy and ambitious persons who, having been brought up above their means and rank in society, are induced to exercise their craft and subtilty to support such pretensions.

"Florence was without beauty, and even without elegance or dignity; she had few acquirements, and no superior talents; and yet she had a remarkable influence over the minds of those whom she had once found means to draw within the circle of her fascinations, though her influence was generally greater with her own sex than with the other, which might perhaps be attributed to her want of personal advantages.

"This young woman soon found means to make herself almost necessary to me while I remained at school. She first patronized me as a junior and a stranger. I had a slight illness, and she paid me the most indefatigable attentions, even greater than the occasion needed. When I was a little better, she sat with me in my room, and embraced the opportunity to give me the history of every individual of the family, managing so artfully her short and animated recitals, that she contrived to set me

against every person in the establishment, without leaving me at all aware that she was thereby entwining her snares more and more firmly around my heart.

"At the end of two years, I was to return home, my father having engaged to come for me to Paris; and by this time I was become so deeply attached to Florence, that I applied to my father for permission to bring her back with me, and make her my companion.

"This permission was granted by my indulgent parent; and Florence, who had no home and little fortune, heard of it with unfeigned delight, although she was careful not to let me suspect that this had been the object for which she had been manœuvering ever since I had become known to her.

"When my father arrived, I was much struck with his appearance, which indicated a great failure not only of health but of spirits. He accounted for these symptoms, by informing me that my mother-in-law (to whom he was tenderly attached) was in a languishing condition, and that he feared he should soon be deprived of her. Accordingly, when we arrived at home, I saw an awful change in her appearance: death had already set his signet on her lovely face; and within a month we followed her to her grave.

"Though every means had been used by my own mother's family and their adherents to prejudice me against this engaging lady, yet I must have had a heart of stone, had I not loved her; and therefore my grief at her death was sincere, though neither deep nor lasting.

"Persons of the strongest feelings are not always the most useful on occasions of sickness and death in families; while, on the other hand, those who neither can feel nor appear to feel excite only disgust and irritation. But Florence was neither of the one nor the other of these descriptions of persons. She undoubtedly had no deep feelings for any one but herself; but, on the other hand, she could seem to feel, she was active where exertion was wanting, and ready in dispensing her assistance when it suited her interest so to do. At this time, therefore, she made herself useful and agreeable, and won considerably on the affections of the family, although my nurse, who was with us at the castle for some months during our affliction, plainly told me that she did not

like her, and advised me not to give her my confidence, or to submit myself too much to her influence. 'I wish,' said Marguerite, 'that I did not see this violent attachment between you, Mademoiselle, and Mademoiselle de Castres. Have you not a sister much nearer your own age, and as much superior to Mademoiselle Florence, as the rose to the thistle? and yet you forsake your natural friend, the friend appointed by God, and unite your affections to a stranger, to one who may appear to be sincere, but of whom you can have no assurance.'

"I did not say that this very superiority of Eglantine was the real cause of my not seeking her friendship; for it was not only to Florence that I believed her superior, but, as I feared, to myself. However, I made no such confession as this to my nurse, nor indeed to myself; for those who are most subjected to feelings of an envious nature, are most backward in acknowledging them to their own hearts.

"There is, perhaps, no passion of the human heart which brings its own punishment more directly than envy. Where admiration exists without envy, it acts with a kind of magic influence (if I may be permitted to use the expression) on the admirer's mind, and the admired object soon begins to reflect its real or fancied glories in the character of its admirer. Hence, we often find the effect of female excellencies reflected on the husband or the brother (for envy of females is rarely met with in the other sex) in a most remarkable manner, while the same sweet influence is lost upon the sister, who looks on this superiority with an eye less free from the tinge of jealousy. Here, then, envy brings her own punishment, by preventing the happy influence which the contemplation of lovely objects very frequently insures, and by inducing the envious person to mingle with inferior society, he shuns the examples best suited for his imitation.

"If such, then, my reader, is the nature of envy, let me supplicate you to look into your heart, and seek the divine help to exterminate that enemy which made heaven itself a place of torment to the fallen angels, who were unable to contemplate the glory of God himself without such feelings of malignity as rendered it neces-

sary that they should be plunged from their high estate into endless ruin and eternal woe.

"I am sorry to add, that my nurse's admonitions had little effect on me, though they drew me to a more minute consideration of the character of my sister, which, in proportion as her deep grief for the loss of her mother wore away, unfolded itself more and more to my view. She was, undoubtedly, remarkably lovely in her outward appearance; but her mind had a simple, delicate, and infantine character. She was not deficient either in dignity or elegance, still she had an ease and courtesy, a cheerfulness and openness of manner, which might subject her intentions to be misunderstood: but hers was unaffected artlessness, and resulted from her unacquaintedness with the world, and a freedom from all suspicion.

"Eglantine had a delicate feeling, and would have felt a degree of horror at appearing imprudent. She was awake to every reproof which was kindly given, and ready to correct any error. She therefore most needed a guide at the very time she lost her prudent mother: for though her grief operated for many months as a restraint on her too lively feelings, yet, as I before remarked, at the end of twelve months she resumed in a great measure her natural vivacity.

"She first began to exercise that vivacity by breaking in upon my private conversations with Florence. She would sometimes steal into my room while we were working together at one piece of embroidery, and more than once gently pushed our heads together, saying we were not intimate enough, and were not close enough to tell secrets.

"It was impossible to fix upon her an idea that we were offended on these occasions: when I expostulated gravely, she always laughed, and told me I was getting old, affirming that she already saw an incipient wrinkle in my face, many of which wrinkles, she affirmed, were completely established in the face of Mademoiselle de Castres; a sort of jesting which pleased neither of us, and which we were indisposed to attribute to the thoughtlessness which dictated them.

"She now began to make frequent visits to her grandfather, Anselm de Xerés, who was become an old man, and doated on his dimpled and smiling granddaughter;

and there she would amuse herself with a thousand freaks, of some of which Florence and myself were eye-witnesses, as we sat in our balcony, which opened from my chamber, and almost projected over a part of the river.

"On one of these occasions, she dressed her grandfather in an old court suit, which had belonged to the Marquis de Roquefort in the days of Henry the Fourth, stiff with gold and silver embroidery; and, tying his hair in a queue with a bag, and placing a sword on his side, she handed him into the gallery or covered walk which encircled the first story of the farm-house, where she tutored him to make his bows to us, the ladies of the castle, who were plying our needles in the opposite balcony.

"I well remember a conversation which passed between me and Florence on this occasion, and could repeat it word for word.

"On seeing Eglantine and her grandfather, we both laughed heartily, and undoubtedly did all that the distance would admit to encourage her gambols. But, as she led the old man off, I said, 'Well, Florence, and what do you think of all this?'

"She smiled, shrugged up her shoulders, and said nothing.

"I pressed her for an answer; and she then said, 'All this is very well for Anselm de Xerés' granddaughter.'

"'But do you think there is any thing really wrong or imprudent in these things?' I asked.

"'*Wrong! imprudent!*—these are hard words,' replied Florence. 'Why should we use them? Your sister is a pretty little thing; why should we find fault with her?'

"'But you think her a little rustic, do not you, Florence?' I asked.

"'She has never been in Paris,' returned my confidant, 'and she is Anselm's granddaughter; and yet she is well enough. She has few awkward ways; she might even pass for a second Fleurette. It is almost a pity that she is the daughter of a marquis, and entitled to an immense dowry.'

"'Immense!' I said, 'whence is it to come?'

"'From old Anselm,' she said. 'She is his only child, though he might marry again, and have another family. But, setting this possibility aside, she will be heiress of multitudes of flocks and herds, of stores of wool and

flax, with barns and vineyards, orchards and extensive lands. And then,' added she, 'there is no Salic law, no deed of entail, to stand in her way.'

"I endeavoured to repress a sigh, and said, 'But do you really think that Eglantine has any thing of the peasante, that she has any thing of her mother's family about her?'

"'Why should you ask me?' said Florence; 'cannot you see yourself? Was it not but yesterday that she went off to Marguerite's cottage with a basket of cold pies which she had stolen or wheedled from the maitre d' hotel—that she carried it herself, although her maid went with her—and that we met her, on her return, with the same basket filled with flowers on her head, which she balanced as nicely as if she had been accustomed to carry eggs to market ever since her sixth year?'

"'I remember it,' I said; 'indeed, how could I have forgotten it? for I thought I never saw her look so lovely as she did at the moment we first saw her, for the branch of wild roses which hung down from the basket was quite eclipsed by the charming bloom of her cheek.'

"'She was then in her place,' replied Florence; 'and every thing and every person looks best in their own place. Some persons,' she added, glancing at me, 'are born for courts, others for camps, and others for a rural life. Each situation requires a different kind of talents: but there is this difference, that those who are born for shepherds and shepherdesses would make but poor figures in the royal presence; while, on the other hand, that female who could shine in the presence of majesty would add a grace to a crook and straw hat, and to a basket of flowers borne on her head, which the country person could never display.'

"'Then you really think,' I asked, 'that there is a sort of rustic coarseness about Eglantine?'

"'Not more than might be expected,' she replied, 'considering her retired education.'

"'Still, however,' I added, 'still, however, you think that it is so?'

"'Only fancy her,' replied Florence, 'only fancy your little wild sister at court, at Versailles, for instance, in the presence of majesty, laughing, as she did but now, first on one side, then on the other, of the old beau whom

she had made, and courtesying as she did to him in mock politeness; only fancy it, Mademoiselle Constance, and then tell me what you think.'

"'But she was at play just now,' I answered.

"'Well, then, watch her when she is not at play. We expect your cousin Xavier soon, with several of his young friends: observe your sister in this company; and if you do not detect a thousand rusticities, I shall say that you have not that delicate tact which I give you credit for.'

"Thus terminated our conversation, but not so its consequences. I had never so plainly displayed my sentiments with respect to my sister at any former time before Florence, and my conscience censured me for having so done at this time: I was therefore dissatisfied with myself, and could not help feeling that I had done wrong as it respected Eglantine; and I felt that I wanted something to reconcile me with myself, and this something I desired to find in Eglantine's conduct. I therefore began to search eagerly for failures in her behaviour, that I might justify my censures of her; and thus I was prepared to rejoice in her blunders, and to magnify them. My conduct resembled that of a certain man, of whom I have somewhere read, who, having professed great joy on hearing that his neighbour's son was hanged, was asked by one present wherefore he was so glad, and if the young man had ever done him an injury. 'No, to be sure,' he replied, 'never, that I know of: but I always predicted that he would turn out ill, and now, you see, it is come to pass.' Accordingly, I had intimated that my sister was an ill-bred little peasant, and I now hoped soon to see myself justified in the assertion.

"A few days after this conversation, Xavier arrived, and brought with him several young officers; among whom was a remarkably pleasing young man, the younger brother of a noble house, called the Comte de Perouse. Had I been left to my own choice, I should, no doubt, have preferred the Comte de Perouse to my cousin; but I had such an estimation of the advantages I was to derive from a marriage with Xavier, that I made no objection to my father's proposal, that it should be celebrated within a month after his arrival. And when my father's death took place, an event which happened within the first year of our marriage, I had reason to be

thankful that such an establishment had been secured to me.

"My sister was exceedingly affected at the death of our father; and being invited by her grandfather, and not pressed on the other hand by me to stay in her paternal mansion, she left me immediately after the funeral solemnities were performed, and took up her residence at the farm, some of the apartments of which were newly furnished and beautified for her accommodation.

"My sister remained single till the year of mourning for our father had expired; after which, she married the Comte de Perouse, who, being in possession of a very small patrimony, gladly settled in the house with his lovely young comtesse and her father, and there enjoyed, as I have reason to think, more happiness than often falls to the lot of man.

"In the mean time, although I had by no means met with a devoted husband, I was not unhappy: I adopted my own pleasures, and was left at liberty to enjoy them; and my husband interfered the less, because my habits were domestic and economical, although I supported the ancient customs of the family, and suffered them not to degenerate from their former magnificence. I was exceedingly fond of needlework, and delighted in ornamenting the apartments of the castle. I had great delight in occasionally giving a grand entertainment to my country neighbours, in displaying my superb equipage in the little towns in the vicinity, and in hearing the gossip of the country from my friend Florence de Castres; and I possessed at that time so little relish for any thing better, and so much indifference to all other things, that I never regretted the frequent absences of my husband, who, after his marriage, became more devoted to a military life, and often acknowledged that he felt himself more at home in a camp than in his own house.

"I must now pass over several years of my life, which were marked by no other special events than the births of my children and those of the Comtesse de Perouse. Two only were given to me: the eldest, a son, to whom we gave the name of Bertram, is the present Marquis de Roquefort; and the younger, a daughter, my ever-beloved and lamented Agnace. The Comtesse de Perouse, on the other hand, had many children; some of whom

died in infancy, but a large proportion of this charming family are still living. Her eldest son was called Charles, after his father, and resembled his mother more, in my opinion, than any of her children. She was one of the most beautiful women I ever remember to have seen, and he was, undoubtedly, a most rare instance of external perfection in the other sex. Oh! how readily, at these recollections, I could give utterance to feelings which overwhelm my heart almost to distraction!—but I forbear, and proceed with my narrative.

"While our children were in infancy, I lived on no disagreeable terms with my sister. We did not often meet, for our habits were dissimilar, but when we did, it was with apparent cordiality; and our intercourse was the more agreeable from the presence of the Comte de Perouse, whose highly polished manners always kept me and my companion Florence in some awe, and in a degree compelled us to treat his lady with the respect and affection due to her birth and character. In short, his presence was commanding, and kept us in order, putting a restraint upon that disposition to *persiflage* which was so prevalent in my companion, and for which I had so high a relish.

"Old Anselm de Xerés died when his eldest great-grandchild was about ten years of age, and was sincerely lamented by his granddaughter, who, with her husband, followed him to his grave.

"Such were the leading events of the first fifteen years of my married life and that of my sister; during which time, we always lived in apparent friendship, which was, undoubtedly, more cordial on her side than on mine, for Eglantine ever retained her sincerity of character.

"In the mean time, there was a free intercourse between our children, and scarcely a day passed wherein they did not meet. Though a lover of home, I was a careless mother. My children were intrusted to a tutor and a governess, who gave them their lessons at certain hours, but relinquished the care of them at other times. My son was naturally of a violent temper, with a considerable degree of pride, which was fostered not only by me, but by Florence, who no doubt supposed that she was gratifying me, and successfully accomplishing her own purpose, when, in my presence, she inflated my

son's mind with high ideas of his birth and consequence in society. His chief delight was in rural sports, in climbing the mountains, and pursuing the game among the wilds and over the heaths, in company with the servants and tenants: in consequence of which he left his sister much alone; and, as I was too much wrapped up in my artful companion to afford myself leisure for cultivating the society of my child, it could not be wondered at if she were led to seek companions among her cousins.

"My Agnace was, from infancy, a lovely child. It is difficult to give a description of the sort of beauty which she possessed. The rose, the lily, the violet, and the tulip, have been used as emblems of female beauty; but, were I to compare the attractions of my Agnace to any flower of the field, it should be to the anemone, which, as the poet tells us, sprang from the blood of the dying Adonis.

> 'Still here the fate of lovely forms we see,
> So sudden fades the sweet anemone!
> The feeble stems, to stormy blasts a prey,
> Their fragile beauties droop and pine away;
> The winds forbid the flowers to flourish long,
> Which owe to winds their names in Grecian song.'

O my Agnace! I endeavour to soothe my misery by describing thy beauties, and attempting to place thy excellencies before others. But the effort fails; the flower is faded; and the sad assurance that thou art lost to me for ever excludes all earthly comfort; the balm of Gilead only can staunch a wound like this.

"Charles de Perouse had from infancy selected my little Agnace as his favourite companion. He was brave and strong, and she was the reverse. She was timid, and easily depressed; and he was ever ready to observe the tear on her cheek, and wipe it away. At the period when I first observed this action, he could not have been more than six years of age, and she was little more than three. They were both playing in the room where I sat at my embroidery with Florence. She had fallen down and hurt her foot: he took off her shoes, rubbed her uncovered foot, and wiped her eyes with his frock, for he still wore the first dress of childhood.

"When they were a few years older, the chief delight of this youthful pair was to wander together in the charm-

ing environs of the castle, to lose themselves in the little valleys of the mountains, where no sound reaches the ear but the rush of waterfalls and the murmur of the turtle-dove, and to enjoy renewed pleasure amidst the thousand grottos formed by the rocks of marble, with which those lovely hills every where abound.

"I indulged the prevailing opinion entertained by most careless mothers, that so long as their children associate only with those of their own degree, no harm can accrue to them from their companions. My dear child might have suffered by such neglect on my part, but it was so ordered by Providence, that in this particular instance, my little Agnace was to remain uninjured in the society of her cousin: but this safety, humanly speaking, was owing more to the care which his parents had taken in his education, than to any caution given by me. The Comte de Perouse was a truly pious man, and, as such, it cannot be supposed that he should have neglected the religious instruction of his children. His labours to benefit Charles, as afterwards appeared, had been blessed; and I have reason to think, that my sweet Agnace derived most of her ideas of true religion from the intercourse above described. For Charles, it seems, had certain portions of Scripture given him for his daily study; and as he often devoted the hours spent with Agnace to this study, he frequently employed her to examine him in his lessons, and thus led her to a more serious consideration of Scripture than she might otherwise have been inclined to make. Independent of his allotted tasks, the young de Perouse was a lover of reading, even from a child: this induced him to visit the old library of the castle, which, in my time, was suffered to remain much neglected; and there, having found a ponderous volume of romance concerning the Heroes of Roncevalles, it became the constant companion of his walks with Agnace, when she was about ten years of age, amid that very line of hills which had witnessed the very actions of those renowned personages.

"A celebrated writer of the present day has remarked, that romance is less injurious to the harder than the softer sex; and this may well be, as the kind of feelings excited by such productions have a tendency to meliorate the character where it is inclined to harshness, and to

enervate it when inclined to weakness. The present age is, however, not an age of romantic feeling; the state of society inclines not to this error; and our present works of imagination partake very little of the eccentricities and overstrained yet heroic sentiments with which our ancient romances abounded. These provinces, however, in which our children were educated, had not as yet departed very far from the spirit of the heroic and romantic times. There was scarcely a character of modern taste and manners among us, if we except Florence, and myself, rendered so by her influence; for she had already made me just what she wished, although it may appear marvellous to any one who is not a close observer of life, to consider the degree in which I had fallen under the dominion of this artful woman, and to what extent she had rendered herself necessary to me.

"In the mean while, years passed on with little variation. My children grew up about me, and my husband at intervals returned to his home, but always appeared restless when with us, and anxious to return to the camp. When Bertram was fifteen, he took him with him to his regiment, where he purposed to initiate him in military affairs; and this same year, a chasm was made in our little circle by the sudden death of the Comte de Perouse, by which calamity Eglantine became a widow, and for a season appeared inconsolable, and perfectly incapable of rousing herself from the paralysing influence of so painful an event.

"I was not so insensible as not to feel for my sister on this occasion; and as I found that she was much consoled by the presence of Agnace, I suffered her to be continually with her, and thus administered further opportunities for her associating with Charles, who, by the death of his father and grandfather, had become the stay and support of his widowed parent and the younger children.

"By the death of the Comte de Perouse, whom it was impossible not to honour as a gentleman and a Christian, and whom a person of duplicity must have feared as a man of great discernment into character, it appears that a restraint had been suddenly taken away from the tongue of Florence, who, not long after his death, began to utter certain insinuations against the comtesse, for

whom, it seems, she had always felt that kind of dislike which low-minded and envious persons commonly feel for their superiors.

"I remember the occasion on which this feeling first began to display itself, after the death of the comte. It was one summer's afternoon, and the season was particularly sultry. I was sitting with Florence in my own apartment, which opened by folding-doors into a balcony which hung over the water. The doors were open, and we had a full view of one front of the opposite house, with the extent of gallery which extended round the first floor. For some time we heard not a voice, and saw not a human being belonging to the family; and Florence remarked that there was a great stillness on that side of the house since his death.

"'Those apartments just before us were his,' I replied, 'and that balcony his favourite spot.'

"'True,' she answered; 'and I doubt not that the widow cannot yet bring her mind to visit this her husband's favourite haunt. But time does wonders in drying up the sources of grief: your sister used to have a wonderful flow of spirits, and great elasticity of mind; she is yet young, and I doubt not but that she will console herself by and by.'

"There was something in the tone of her voice, as she uttered these words, which made me look up as she spoke; but she was bending over her work, and I could not perceive the expression of her countenance. I therefore replied, 'Undoubtedly there is no grief which time does not alleviate. If we suffered in continuance what we feel at first on any trying occasion, life would become a burden too heavy to be borne.'

"'True,' she answered; 'for, generally speaking, there is no grief more deep than that occasioned by the loss of an affectionate husband, and none for which a remedy is sooner found by a rich and handsome woman.'

"'Why surely, Florence,' I said, 'you do not think that Eglantine, with her eight children, will marry again?'

"'I was speaking in a general way,' she replied, 'and by no means with a view to the comtesse.'

"At that moment a door opened in the opposite house. It was the door of the late comte's apartment, and Agnace appeared leading out her aunt, who seemed to be

weeping. There was a sofa in the gallery: to this Agnace led the comtesse, and they sat down together. Eglantine then evidently wept, and my daughter appeared to be consoling her. Though so remote, I fancied that I could discern every change in the well-known countenance of my charming daughter.

"'A pretty scene,' said Florence, as she looked on the lovely pair; 'but I am rather surprised that none of the comtesse's own daughters are with her. However, I presume that she considers Mademoiselle Agnace as already her own.'

"'How so?' I said.

"'She is, no doubt, assured that the charming daughter of the Marquis de Roquefort is destined for her son.'

"'What,' I said, 'without her parents' acquiescence?'

"'She has, probably, no idea that they will not acquiesce,' she replied.

"'At any rate,' I answered, colouring, 'the thing should be ascertained before she is too confident.'

"'She probably considers,' returned Florence, 'that the young people are equals in rank, and that there can be no question but that the parents will consent.'

"'I do not understand how she can think so,' I answered; 'for the daughter of a marquis must be superior to a simple comte; and it ought ever to be recollected that no vulgar blood flows in the veins of my children. However,' I continued, 'the marquis will, I suppose, arrange this matter; only I would counsel the comtesse not to be too confident. Nevertheless,' I added, 'I can have no objection to Charles, for he is all that a mother could desire for a son-in-law.'

"It was probable that Florence had now found out what she had been endeavouring to discover, namely, my sentiments respecting a union between Charles and Agnace; for she immediately turned from the subject, and asked me some question about our needlework; and then, looking through the open door, she directed my eyes to the gallery on the opposite side of the water. Charles had entered it at that moment; he was bearing in his arms an infant sister; he brought it up to his mother; he held it to her to kiss; and then, setting it on my daughter's lap, he sat down by his mother, and took one hand of hers within his.

"Whether this action of her son reminded her, at this moment, too pathetically of her departed husband, or from what other cause, I know not; but my widowed sister, at that instant, became so affected that her head sunk against the breast of her son, and she seemed almost fainting. He passed his arm round her, and supported her, bending over her with an air of the tenderest compassion, seeming, at the same time, to be talking with her, till, by degrees, she lifted up her head, and her manner became more composed.

"This was a scene which might have touched the hardest heart, and surely would have affected mine, had I been associated with any other companion; but the comments of Florence wholly destroyed the effect of this touching scene, and, like the chilling winds of the north, froze the very tears which gushed from my eyes. ''Tis well,' she said, 'that we know that handsome young man to be the son of the comtesse.'

"'And wherefore?' I hastily asked.

"'I have been thinking how a stranger would interpret the scene before us; for the comtesse, notwithstanding her mourning weeds, looks more like the companion than the mother of the youth.'

"'And pray,' I asked, 'what would a stranger think of the pretty young creature on the right hand of the widow?'

"'O,' replied Florence, 'we will leave her out of the picture; she is one too many in the group.'

"'O, Florence!' I said, 'you indulge in a dangerous kind of wit.' But I smiled while I would be thought to reprove.

"'Before you, my dear friend,' she replied, 'I say any thing which comes uppermost. You know my heart, and I know that you will not misinterpret my meaning. I love you and all that belong to you: to you I am devoted; and though I have smiled at the scene before me, yet I love and honour your sister, because she belongs to you.'

"Time softens the acutest pangs, and heals the deepest wounds. The Comtesse de Perouse was now at the head of a large and very young family. It was necessary for her to exert herself. She did so, and activity brought its own reward by gradually restoring that

cheerfulness which was natural to her character. She was also a woman of piety, and was well assured of the everlasting happiness of her husband; but I have reason to believe that the thoughts of a second marriage never entered her mind.

"I was accustomed from time to time to see her during this period, and Florence never failed to make remarks upon her, to this effect:—'Are not you glad, my dear friend, to see your sister so composed? I always believed that she possessed much strength of mind. It would have consoled the poor comte on his death-bed, could he have foreseen how his widow would be supported under her trials. The comtesse, I am rejoiced to see, is recovering her bloom. She appears rather like the sister than the mother of her eldest daughter.' And then again she would say, 'Did your sister marry from affection, or was it a match of convenience? The comte certainly loved her sincerely, and was devoted to her. I almost wonder that she is not more depressed by the loss of those attentions which he so continually paid to her: but minds are variously formed.'

"'Why, surely,' I would sometimes say, 'you do not mean to insinuate that my sister did not love her husband?'

"'I!' she would reply, 'I insinuate such a thing! Where, my dear marquise, where is your usual discernment? Do you not know that I have the most sincere affection for your lovely sister?'

"While things were in this state, the marquis and my son returned to Roquefort, and remained with us during the whole winter. The intercourse between the families at this time seemed to be friendly, although much conversation passed between me and Florence in private, similar to that of which I have just given a specimen; the consequence of which was, that I began to feel a degree of dissatisfaction in the presence of the comtesse, which I never before experienced.

"However, as I before said, every thing was specious to the eye; and my husband, who was an upright and honourable character, never seemed to suspect that I was not as sincerely attached to my sister as I pretended to be.

"It was during this visit of the marquis at Roquefort,

that Charles, now Comte de Perouse, made his wishes known respecting Agnace; and the youthful pair were rendered happy by receiving the parental sanction to their intended union, which it was proposed should take place when the young gentleman was of age.

"I cannot precisely say, that I was not consulted on the occasion. The marquis undoubtedly mentioned the matter to me before he gave his consent; but not, indeed, until he had made up his own mind: yet, as I had no rational objection to make, I was induced to acquiesce, although I certainly wished the thing to be otherwise, yet I scarcely knew why.

"The thing, however, was so far settled; the promise was made to Charles, and imparted to Agnace; and all this within the period of one hour, during which, I had been engaged in my husband's apartment, Charles and Bertram being present. In the mean time, I had left Florence at her embroidery frame in my room.

"I had, by degrees, so entirely submitted to the influence of Mademoiselle de Castres, and she had exercised what she called her rights of friendship with so much vivacity, that I was almost afraid of taking any step of consequence without her concurrence; and on this occasion, I felt really uneasy, when I returned to my chamber and found her colour heightened, and displeasure marked on her features.

"It may be asked, how this indigent and dependent person could have obtained this power over one in my situation. I answer: Because I had hearkened to her flatteries, and made her the depository of my secrets. I had made complaints to her respecting my husband. I had intrusted her with my most inmost thoughts. I had made her acquainted with all my hopes and fears, my jealousies and triumphs. I had betrayed all my weaknesses to her; and I dreaded that tongue, which had been allowed to scourge all my nearest connexions with the utmost freedom even in my presence. And, more than this, I had a deep and unaccountable dread of her, which had lately increased upon me to a degree which would baffle description, but of a kind which others no doubt have felt who have suffered their affections to be fixed on unworthy objects. 'Where may you have been so long, Madame?' said Florence, as soon as I was seat-

ed; 'apparently you have had a very interesting conversation with Monsieur the marquis.'

"'And wherefore do you think so, Florence?' I asked.

"'From your countenance,' she replied, speaking confidently, and looking me full in the face. 'It would be strange, if I, who have known you so long, could not read your countenance.'

"I tried to laugh, and answered, 'I never doubted your skill in physiognomy, Florence.'

"'Indeed!' she replied; 'and you really give me credit for penetration. And pray,' she asked, 'what might have been the subject of your late discussion?'

"'Suppose it should happen to have been some secret of the marquis's, Florence, which I am not at liberty to reveal?'

"'Suppose,' she added, with a laugh, which had more of malice than of merriment, 'it should have related to your daughter's marriage with Charles de Perouse?'

"'And what then,' I said, 'would be the wonder?'

"'And you have given your consent?' asked Florence.

"'Have you any objection?' I asked.

"'I have not been consulted,' was her reply; 'when I am, it will be time enough to give my opinion.'

"'What has offended you?' I asked: 'you look displeased.'

"'By no means,' she replied; 'you are at liberty, no doubt, to arrange your own family. The ties of friendship are but imaginary with some persons. They are but ropes of sand with the world generally. I know that I am enthusiastic, irrational on these subjects. My feelings for you and your family are of that kind which reason would not justify. You cannot believe that I have the same feelings for your daughter that you yourself have—I cannot expect—no,' she added, 'no, I cannot expect that you should understand this.'

"So saying, she either melted into tears, or made me suppose that she did; and this scene terminated with an hysterical affection on her part, and many exaggerated and tender expressions on mine.

"After this, we were reconciled, and a new subject supplied for our private discussions; viz. the intended marriage, with its advantages and disadvantages, among the latter of which she enumerated the transfer which

she foresaw of my daughter's affection from her own mother to her more lively mother-in-law.

"'Lively!' I would say on these occasions; 'but Eglantine is not lively now.'

"'Is she not?' she replied, 'have I not already seen the sun breaking through the cloud? have I not already observed the wonted smiles from beneath the widow's veil? O, my friend, how small is your discernment! did you mark her at such and such times; where were her tears on this and that occasion?'

"'But would you have her always weeping, Florence?' I said.

"'Here again,' replied she, 'I am reminded of my false notions of inviolable constancy, never-changing affection, the devotion of the heart, and the never-failing flow of tears.'

"The news of the parental sanction being given to the union of Charles and Agnace was presently conveyed to our good old Marguerite, who was really that disinterested friend of the family which Florence feigned to be. This good creature had grandchildren; but I scarcely think that she loved any of these more than mine and my sister's children. Yet she had her favourites; these were Agnace and Charles; and she was so delighted at the intended connexion, that she appeared next day at the castle, and came up to my apartment to congratulate me.

"I dare not give utterance to my feelings and sentiments, which are ready every moment to break forth while I record these circumstances; I would rather compel myself to relate my story just as it happened, and to point out the rocks and shoals on which I have been shipwrecked, without permitting myself to mingle too much of my own painful feelings with the narration. The tears which have fallen from my eyes, as I have been thus engaged, have in many instances blotted the names of Agnace,—my lovely Agnace,—of Charles, of Eglantine, and Marguerite: but these stains will not appear in the work of the copyist, and my aching heart will probably have ceased to beat before these records shall have passed into other hands.

"I was, as usual, sitting alone with Florence, when Marguerite came in. 'And what, my good Marguerite,' said I, 'has brought you here to-day?'

"'To speak of the good news,' she replied; and immediately commenced the subject with that sort of vivacity for which my countrywomen are celebrated. She had proceeded for some time, and had declared her determination to throw away her staff, and dance at the wedding, when Florence interrupted her, and said, 'My good woman, one would almost think that you were a young girl, and were to be bridesmaid, by the excessive joy you display on looking forward to this marriage.'

"Marguerite was the only person in the family who had accurately understood the character of Florence, and, had I been guided by this truly wise and excellent woman, I had never fallen into the snares laid for me by my artful companion. The good nurse had never been able to judge with any thing like complacency of Florence; and, as she was no courtier, she could not be civil to her even to please me: hence, when addressed by Florence in this manner, she affected deafness; a thing which she always did when hearing any thing she did not like; and, moving her head nearer to the lady, begged she would condescend to repeat her words again.

"Florence, who disliked Marguerite quite as much as she was disliked, repeated her speech, with some additions.

"'Did you say that you wished to be bridesmaid?' said the nurse.

"Florence again repeated her speech, on which Marguerite, affecting to take it in, said, 'O, now I understand you. O, you would have me dance at your wedding, would you? Well, and I should do it with the greatest pleasure, provided—'

"'Provided what?' asked Florence.

"'Your husband should prove to be a foreigner,' said the nurse.

"'And what do you mean by that?' returned Florence.

"But Marguerite was deaf again, and was busily engaged in speaking of the proposed happy alliance.

'Happy alliance! Ah! it would have been happy—it might have been happy, if——: but I must not anticipate. O, my Agnace!

"In the beginning of that same summer, my husband and son left home again; and then we were soon con-

scious that we needed that influence which an honourable man, of whatever degree, always diffuses over the minds of wives, daughters, and sisters, given to gossip and low intrigue.

"Soon after the departure of my husband, I went with my daughter and Florence to Bagneres, under the pretext of benefiting by the waters, for I had lately chosen to suppose that my health was delicate.

"We were visited at Bagneres several times during the six weeks of our residence there, by the Comte de Perouse; and there my Agnace enjoyed some happy hours, no doubt, with the object of her most warm affections, while wandering with him among the numerous lovely scenes near the fountains of Thermales.

"We returned from Bagneres at the end of the vintage. Charles was to have met us on our way, but he did not appear; a circumstance which evidently caused much uneasiness to Agnace and some entertainment to Florence, who failed not to hint that she hoped this non-appearance of the comte was not owing to any inconstancy in his feelings.

"'I have no suspicion of the kind,' replied Agnace, 'I esteem the comte: but my esteem would be little worth the possession, if it were liable to vary with every accident.'

"'You are displeased, my dear Agnace?' said Florence.

"'No,' replied my daughter, 'I am not; I have been too long accustomed, Mademoiselle de Castres, to your modes of expressing yourself respecting your friends, to be in the least affected by them.'

"Florence coloured, and Agnace proceeded: 'Young as I am,' continued she, 'I have been led to observe, that there is a way of speaking of our absent connexions which has a powerful tendency to extinguish every charitable feeling. There is scarcely a human being, however amiable, whom one might not first learn to despise, and then almost to hate, by the indulgence of this kind of discourse; and I have therefore not unfrequently made it a subject of prayer, that my heart and tongue might never be suffered to become mutual tempters of each other to such a practice.'

"'Explain yourself a little further,' said Florence, looking keenly yet steadily at her.

"'With all my heart,' said Agnace. 'Are you not aware that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh? The heart then dictates what the mouth speaks, Mademoiselle de Castres; and it does more than this: for when the tongue, by the suggestions of an evil heart, has spoken unadvisedly, it endeavours to furnish that tongue with excuses, and it feels an exultation when such excuses are provided by the object which it is conscious of having injured.'

"'Mathematically demonstrated!' exclaimed Florence. 'And so you do not allow that there is such a thing as uttering with the lips what does not proceed from the heart?'

"'No,' replied Agnace, 'I allow of no such thing.—*Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.*' (James iii. 11, 12.)

"'Very well!' said Florence. 'But what is the object of this discussion? for whom is it intended? and to whom do you wish to apply these remarks?'

"'My remark,' replied Agnace, 'will admit of general application.'

"'And particular application also?' added Florence.

"'No doubt,' said Agnace, 'each individual of our fallen race may apply it personally.'

"Florence gave her another searching look, and then, turning to me, she congratulated me on having a daughter who possessed so deep an insight into the human heart.

"It was very late when we arrived at Roquefort. The first enquiry of Agnace was after her aunt's family: but the servants could give us no further information, than that the next day was the feast of the vintage; that Madame la Comtesse had given permission to her tenants to dance; that there were some visiters at their house; and that several messages had been sent to the castle to request the company of the ladies at the feast, provided they arrived in time.

"'O,' said Florence, 'the feast of the vintage. It was in the beginning of the vintage that the comte died last year. Well, the widow has fulfilled her year of mourning. We cannot say but that all has been done decently.'

"We were ascending the great stairs of the castle, while Florence uttered these words: Agnace did not hear them; but they were not lost upon me.

"'You would do well,' said Florence, 'to have your daughter's bed prepared in your closet: you have no husband or son to protect her now; and, no doubt, now that the father is dead, and the mother has recovered her spirits, the young people at the farm will not be under the strictest guidance. I therefore think that you cannot be too careful of Agnace.'

"'Surely,' I replied, 'you do not doubt the prudence of my sister! and her eldest daughter is, without question, a most discreet and amiable young creature.'

"'I have nothing to say against Mademoiselle Rosamond,' replied Florence. 'I have given my opinion merely as a friend; and you are at liberty, of course, either to follow it or reject it.'

"We had by this time entered the range of my apartments, where we found preparations made for our supper. It was here where the folding-doors opened into the balcony. Agnace, on entering the room, had stepped immediately into the balcony, and was looking towards the house of her aunt. Florence and I followed her. It had been a sultry day, and the cool breezes which played upon the smooth surface of the water were particularly refreshing. The moonbeams rested on the whole scene, and shed a faint, soft light on the surrounding landscape, the outline of the old turrets of my sister's house being distinctly marked by the glow on the horizon in the background, where the last rays of day still lingered on the summits of that range of the Pyrenees which was visible in that direction. The rippling of the waters, and the distant bark of the watch-dog in the court of the farm, alone disturbed the perfect stillness. Agnace was leaning against the parapet of the balcony, and Florence presently detected the silent tear which was stealing down her cheek. 'Your daughter is weeping!' whispered she to me: 'she is vexed because she cannot see any of the comte's family this evening.'

"'Vexed!' I replied; 'and cannot she exist a day without some intercourse with these people? I now plainly see what you have so long predicted, namely, the entire transfer of my daughter's affections.'

"And it was certainly true that Agnace loved her aunt more than she did her mother; but there had been no transfer of affections, for, though ever dutiful, she had never loved me as she might have done, because I had not sought her love. I had been an indolent nurse, a careless guardian, and a disagreeable companion, to this my lovely and only daughter; and now I expected to reap grapes where I had planted thorns, and figs where thistles only had been sown. On the other hand, my warm-hearted sister had lived only for her husband and children. Their happiness and good were her perpetual object; and even now, in her widowed state, she would not suffer her own sorrows to embitter the young days of her beloved ones. If Agnace, therefore, loved her more than she loved me, it was but the natural course of things.

"The last expression I had used in speaking to Florence had been heard by Agnace: on which, she hastily brushed her hand across her eyes, and turned round, but did not speak. 'On what are you meditating, Agnace?' I said.

"'I was thinking of my aunt,' she simply replied, 'and feel almost afraid that all is not well with her. Shall we not send to enquire?'

"'To-morrow may do as well,' I answered.

"'Supper and bed is what we must think of now,' said Florence. 'And in the mean time, what orders shall I give' (addressing me) 'respecting Mademoiselle's sleeping-apartment?'

"'Do,' I answered, 'take the trouble off my hands, and explain the arrangement to Agnace.' So saying, I withdrew to my chamber, waiting till supper was prepared.

"Had Agnace been trained, from infancy, to feel enjoyment in her mother's presence, and had she been taught that it was a privilege, at any time, to share her bed, she would now have heard of this plan with pleasure. But ah! those days of infancy were gone, past recovery gone, and no such impression had been made; and thus had her natural feelings been neglected.

"I know not how she received the information that she was to be inclosed at night within my chamber; but, no doubt, with dutiful and discreet self-command. Never-

theless, when I returned, I found Florence with a flushed complexion, and Agnace looking exceedingly pale.

"I felt myself depressed as I sat down to supper; on which occasion Florence began to exert those powers of amusement which she certainly possessed to a high degree. The subject which she chose for our conversation was the company we had lately left at Bagneres, where multitudes of strangers were assembled to pay their devotions to the naiad of the place. She talked and talked, till insensibly I became interested and amused; but all this while not one smile illuminated the features of Agnace. 'You do not laugh, Mademoiselle?' said Florence, 'you do not even smile?'

"'I am fatigued,' replied Agnace: 'may I be permitted to go to rest?'

"'Do so,' I said, 'since our conversation does not amuse you.'

"She sprang up hastily, and was moving to her chamber, when I called her back. 'You do not kiss me, Agnace? you do not embrace your mother?' I said.

"She returned to me; she came close to me; she put her arms round me, burst into tears, and at the same time dropping on her knees, 'Bless me, my mother!' she said, 'bless your child! O, why, why has this coldness subsisted so long between us?'

"I could not but be affected by this; and as I returned her embrace, 'Agnace,' I said, 'don't give me reason to think that you love others better than you do me.'

"'Ah, mamma!' she answered, and shook her head.

"'What means my Agnace?' I asked.

"Her gentle eye glanced on Florence, and she said, 'Do you hold it impossible, mamma, that the heart can contain only one object of regard?' Then hastily rising, she kissed me again, leaving some of her tears on my cheek, and hastily quitted the room.

"At the same moment, Florence rose, and taking up a candle, was walking out of the room, haughtily pronouncing her 'Good night.'

"I had done well to have let her go, and to have taken no cognizance whatever of her airs; but I called her back, and, trembling at her anger, I asked her what had grieved her; and those arms which had so recently em-

braced the lovely Agnace, were the next moment clasped around this dangerous, most dangerous of women.

"Such conduct and feelings, evinced by me, may excite astonishment; but I fear I may appeal to many as proofs of such bewitching influence, obtained over them by an artful and fascinating woman, in whom they had reposed, too hastily, the confidence which is due only to the sincere and worthy: the pages of history, the secrets of courts, and the affairs of many families, if known by us, would disclose and illustrate the debasing fact.

"Thus closed the evening; and when Agnace came out of her closet in the morning, she found me in my bed, and Florence pouring out my coffee by the side of it.

"Agnace sat down with Florence without being bid, and, while we were breakfasting, a note was given to Agnace. She coloured on receiving it. It was written by the young comte, but was very short.

"'And what says Charles, Agnace?' I enquired.

"'How does he excuse himself for his neglect yesterday?' asked Florence.

"'The old shepherd,' replied Agnace, 'fell down in a fit early in the morning, and Charles, instead of coming to meet us, went on his swiftest horse to procure assistance for him. But he is now recovered.'

"'And you are happy?' said Florence. 'No more tears!'

"'No, not quite happy,' replied Agnace; 'for Rosamond has sprained her ancle.'

"'O what a misfortune!' exclaimed Florence. 'Would not this be a good occasion for another touching scene like that of the past night?'

"'No, no,' replied Agnace, smiling and looking cheerful. 'However, I am sorry for Rosamond, because she will not be able to dance to-night. But Charles was here this morning, and you saw him, Mademoiselle de Castres, and told him that we had a particular engagement, which would prevent our receiving him, if he called after breakfast.' And she looked enquiringly at her.

"'I gave him that answer,' she replied 'by the order of Madame la Marquise, because she wishes you to keep yourself quiet this morning, that you may be fitter for the evening.'

"Agnace acquiesced in this plan without a murmur.

"In the evening, we crossed the little river, and passed over to the farm, and, going through the garden without seeing any of the family, we proceeded to the vineyards, which lay at a short distance, and there, on a green platform beneath the shade of a rocky eminence, we saw the party assembled. It was a beautiful spot, richly skirted with trees, while a clear water, which fell from the heights into the valley, added not a little to the interest of the scenery.

"There, on the grass adorned with many flowers, sat the comtesse, the younger part of her children being gathered round her, while some of the elder ones and several young ladies and gentlemen of the neighbourhood were dancing together; the peasants of the place were there dressed in their holiday garbs, and the musicians were placed on a kind of stage in the centre of the dancing parties. In another part of the rural place of assemblage, a simple repast, consisting of fruits and cream, garnished with flowers, was set forth beneath the shade of several tall trees. Near this were gathered some of the elders of the village and household, among whom I distinguished the venerable Marguerite and her husband.

"The moment we appeared Charles was at the side of Agnace, and was leading her to her place in the dance. As Florence and I advanced towards the comtesse, I remarked that the scene was gay and pretty.

"'True,' she replied; but at the same time sighed.

"'Why do you sigh, Florence?' I asked.

"'I am thinking,' answered she, 'of the poor comte, the father and husband of some of these now assembled, and I have been calculating that it is now scarcely thirteen months since he was committed to the dust.'

"I could make no reply, for the comtesse had risen to meet us; but the ideas which Florence had suggested were so grating, at that moment, to my feelings, that I could not answer the salutations of my sister with that agreeable manner which the circumstances of our meeting seemed to require.

"'I hope,' said Eglantine, embracing me, 'that you are well, dear Constance?'

"'Perfectly so,' I answered.

"'But you look so serious!' said my sister; 'I trust you have heard no bad news?'

"'None,' I replied: still, however, while speaking, I felt embarrassed.

"'That is well,' returned Eglantine. And being at that instant addressed by some newly-arrived visiters, she turned from me, and I was again left with Florence.

"There were many persons present with whom I was acquainted. Several of these presently joined us, and we sat down at some distance, to look at the dancers and converse with each other.

"At length Florence, touching my arm, directed my attention to the other end of the lawn, where the comtesse had again sat down with her youngest child on her knees, and the next in age standing by her. An elderly lady had been conversing with her, but was then moving away, and her vacant seat, close to the comtesse, had been taken by an exceedingly fine young man, who was engaged, apparently, in some very interesting discourse with her. 'Do you see that?' said Florence in a whisper.

"'I do,' I replied; 'what can it mean?'

"'And now,' said she, 'he bends down his head close to hers. What can be the subject of their discourse?'

"We still looked earnestly at what was passing, and presently we saw Sophie, the youngest but one of my sister's children, run away from the place, and hasten towards the old nurse, who took her on her lap.

"'Ah,' said Florence, 'do you see that? The comtesse does not wish the child to hear what is passing. Little Sophie, we all know, can both see and hear. Stay where you are, Madame,' added she, 'and I will go round by those bushes, and endeavour to find out what all this imports.'

"Florence did so, and I continued in conversation with the ladies who sat by me.

"In the mean time, one set of the dancers had moved their places, and by this means had entirely concealed the comtesse from my sight.

"In about half an hour, Florence returned; but there was no opportunity for communication: we were surrounded with company, and were immediately afterwards called to supper.

"I scarcely know how the remainder of the evening

passed. Charles accompanied us home, and it was not till Agnace was in her closet that I could procure the information I desired from Florence. 'Well, my friend,' I said, as soon as the door was shut after Agnace, 'what have you heard? what have you seen? Am I to prepare myself to receive another brother-in-law?'

"Florence drew her chair closer to mine, and then told her tale; which, after being divested of all amplifications, was simply this, that she had made her way through the trees to the back of the comtesse's seat, and that she had there heard very strong expressions of regard proceed from the mouth of the young man, which were received in such a manner by my sister, as to occasion his most enthusiastic acknowledgments; that these expressions had drawn tears from the comtesse, and that the whole scene had been concluded by the gentleman taking her hand and kissing it with the semblance of the utmost devotedness.

"'And you really think,' said I, 'that the widow is so absurd as to favour this suitor, who is young enough to be her own son?'

"'I do,' said Florence, triumphantly; 'and do you not here see a confirmation of my conjectures? I knew how it would be when the year of mourning was over. But you would not believe me, marquise—you could not believe me.'

"To this effect we conversed for a long time; and, making the conjectures of Florence our foundation, we did not retire to rest till we had built upon it such a fabric as few gossips are capable of rearing who have not a large portion of malignity and envy in their composition.

"It was one hour after midnight when we retired to rest, impatient to know from Agnace the name of this handsome stranger who had been the subject of our conversation.

"In the morning, when Agnace joined us at breakfast, she informed us that this young man was a distant relation of the family of Perouse, and was denominated the Baron de Montauban, but more respecting him she could not tell us. This same morning, as I was writing to Bertram, I failed not to relate our conjectures concerning the comtesse; inserting in my letter some of the witticisms,

on the inconstancy of widows, which had been suggested the last night by my friend.

"Two days passed after this, during which, this second marriage of the comtesse, which we had chosen to fabricate out of our own heads, afforded a constant subject for the sneers of Florence. On one occasion, her sarcasms were so plain, that Agnace, the gentle and simple Agnace, understood them, and, with more spirit than I had often seen her display, asked Mademoiselle de Castres, how she could venture to entertain me by touching the reputation of my sister. Florence coloured very high on receiving this reproof, and for once, perhaps, felt that she had proceeded too far; for she made some sort of apology, confessing that she sometimes allowed herself to speak without premeditation.

"Agnace seemed willing to take the excuse, but as soon as she left the room, Florence remarked, that we must be careful what we said before Mademoiselle de Roquefort; adding, that her devotion to the family of Perouse rendered her wholly blind to the faults of every individual belonging to it.

"It was in the afternoon of the very day in which Mademoiselle de Castres had received the above rebuke from Agnace, that we were visited, unexpectedly, by the comtesse, who, entering with her usual graciousness and sweetness of manner, though I cannot but suppose that she must have seen and felt the indifference towards her which had increased in our behaviour for some time past, informed me, in the presence of Mademoiselle de Castres, that she was come to tell me some news which would please me, as it had done her. She then told me that her daughter had been solicited in marriage by a young man every way worthy of her, viz. the Baron de Montauban; adding, that his first declaration had been made on the evening of the feast of the vintage.

"I was so confounded at this information, that I could not look at Florence, or so much as lift my eyes from the ground. Any other woman but Eglantine would have thought my embarrassment on this occasion unaccountable, but Eglantine was every thing but suspicious. And when she had told her story she changed her subject, and began to say something to Florence on her needlework, and to compliment her on her industry; passing

speedily from this theme to another, and telling us of the affairs of her farm and dairy, her bees and flocks: for her old grandfather had inspired her with a relish for these innocent pursuits. 'My old shepherd,' said she, 'is becoming very infirm, and I have promised his place to the Baron de Montauban, and that of the management of my cows and dairy to my dear Charles and your sweet Agnace, when you can spare her; and then I think my household will be well appointed: for Rosamond has taken charge of the bees, and Eleanor of the poultry, and in time I shall have an office for all. And think you not, Mademoiselle de Castres, that we shall be a very busy family? Yes,' she added, though with a suppressed sigh, 'and a happy one: for I cannot but be happy when my children are so.'

"'And yet,' said Florence, 'you must have some sad remembrances?'

"'And some sweet hopes to balance them,' replied my sister, turning aside and wiping away a tear. 'Yes, Mademoiselle, I have some sweet hopes also, for my beloved husband placed his confidence where it is never placed in vain.' Eglantine then audibly sighed, and could repress her tears no longer; she therefore rose in haste, embraced me, and a moment afterwards was in the boat which was to waft her to her own house, leaving me and Florence to make the best we could of our own mortified feelings.

"For my part, I confess, that when my sister left me, I was so thoroughly confounded and ashamed of myself that I could not speak one word, and a silence ensued, during which I became more and more confused, and, no doubt, should have been long in recovering myself, had not Florence suddenly broke out into a burst of merriment, saying, 'This is excellently well done indeed, perfectly well got up.'

"'What can you mean?' I asked.

"'Why,' said Florence, 'do you not see how it is? The good comtesse had supposed that all the baron's professions had been intended for herself, and, when undeceived, she has judged it necessary to come here with the purpose of making us think that she never thought of the young man in any other light than as a husband for her daughter.'

"I endeavoured to laugh at the turn which Florence had given to this affair, but with a very ill grace. I was really ashamed of myself and of my companion; and I have no doubt that I shewed I was so: for, from this time, Florence never brought forward the name of the baron in connexion with my sister.

"Now I began to feel an indifference towards Florence which I had never before been sensible of; but, unfortunately, immediately after this, I became ill, and, during that illness, which confined me to my bed during the autumn and winter, Florence entirely recovered her influence over me, and made me feel her power again. For I thoughtlessly talked to her without reserve of family matters: complained to her of my husband, who, most certainly, was very careless of me; explained certain ambitious views I had for my son; lamented that a higher match had not been thought of for my daughter; and ridiculed my sister, her bee-hives, and her flocks and herds; and expressed my desires to go to Paris and see a little of the *beau monde;* in short, there was not a secret of my heart, which, at this time, I did not lay open to this dangerous woman.

"The effect of this was, that I was more than ever burdened with the consequences of my folly. I was still in a state of convalescence, when Florence one morning came into my room, and said, with much exultation, 'Now, my dear marquise, I have a piece of news for you.'

"'Of a pleasant nature, no doubt,' I replied, 'from the expression of your countenance?'

"This question seemed rather to make her recollect herself, and she rejoined, 'I don't know why I laugh; but I am apt to do so when agitated: it is a kind of nervous feeling, I believe. But the comtesse your sister, my dear marquise, has been doing so silly a thing, it was impossible not to smile when I was told of it; still, I am very angry with her. Yet it was no more than I foresaw would happen. I knew that she was a woman who could not conduct herself prudently as a widow.'

"'What! has she really been imprudent?' I asked.

"'Yes, really,' said Florence, 'extremely so—ridiculously so. You shall hear it all.' And then, sitting down on the foot of my bed, she told me a long story,

the outline of which was this—that the comtesse and her children had been at Pau for a few days, a thing which I had known before; that the comtesse had there met with an old acquaintance of her husband, the Vicomte Desterres; that he had renewed the intercourse with the family; that the comtesse had invited him to her house without considering his character, which was extremely bad; and that he was now at the farm on the most friendly terms with the whole family. 'And yesterday,' said Florence, 'he drove out your sister in his landau, and is profuse in his compliments and attentions: there is no doubt but that he has a view to her dowry, as she has to be a sharer of his title and distinctions in the *beau monde*.'

"'And there is no question but all this is true,' said I, with glee, for I had already advanced to that degree of malevolence towards my sister, as made me rejoice in hearing of any evil respecting her; and I had brought myself to this improper feeling, by indulging in the vicious habit of speaking ill of her, first in a light and playful way, and then in a serious manner.

"During that day, Florence and I watched our neighbours as with an eye of a basilisk, but we saw none of the family, though we once heard the sound of laughter in the interior of the house, from which circumstance we formed very ill-natured conclusions.

"Agnace, during my illness, had been often at the comtesse's; but this day, having an engagement elsewhere, she did not go. Florence, however, had her spies, and by these she learned that the comtesse had walked in the avenue with the vicomte for near an hour with no other company than her two youngest children; and that, after dinner, she had sat near to him, that is, in the next chair, for more than half an hour, and was addressed by him more than once in a tone so low that it might be almost called a whisper.

"The next day, as it was understood that I was sufficiently recovered to entertain company, I had several visiters: these were ladies of distinction in the neighbourhood. It was natural for us to speak of the comtesse; and shall I confess my wickedness, (for I can call it by no other name,) shall I acknowledge that I took this occasion to insinuate all that was base and degrading respecting the conduct of my sister, as it related to the

vicomte, and that I did this under the mask of friendship, and as if I bitterly deplored the errors I was compelled to acknowledge?

"The tale of slander presently took wing, and gathered strength in its course; and my name was pleaded in confirmation of the scandal. My heart stung me immediately for what I had done, but it was too late: the wound I had inflicted was never to be healed; and the uneasiness of my mind was so apparent, that Florence, after our early dinner, and to divert my attention, invited me to walk out with her.

"Agnace had walked that morning to see Marguerite, and had not returned, but, as she often stayed some hours with the venerable woman, I was not uneasy at her absence. I was weak from my late illness, and could only reach a little elevation just above the castle, and not far from the entrance of the pass from which some part of the little winding path which led to the cottage might be easily perceived. On this elevation was a convenient seat formed by a piece of rock which had fallen from the superior heights; and there I sat down with Florence in that sort of temper which inclined me to find fault with all I saw and all I heard. The rugged heights through which the pass was cut were behind me, and so near that I could lean against a part of their base, and before me was spread a region so charming, so various, and so adorned with the fresh verdure of returning spring, that one would have thought it impossible to have looked upon it without enjoying tranquillity of mind. But my heart was at that time the seat of the most malevolent feelings, and even Florence had little power to make me forget my misery even for a moment. Florence, however, pretended not to notice my low spirits, and went on talking as usual, varying her subjects with no small degree of ingenuity. 'I am tired,' said I at length to her, 'of being always shut up in the country; I am resolved that I will go to Paris, and introduce my daughter into the world. I have done wrong to remain so long at Roquefort.'

"Florence approved the idea, and recommended me to press the point when the marquis should come again to Roquefort, which we supposed would soon happen, as he had been longer absent than usual.

"This visit to Paris was a pleasing subject, and we

dwelt upon it for some time; till suddenly we distinguished two persons moving along the valley in the direction from Marguerite's cottage. These were Agnace and Charles. She was leaning on his arm, and they were moving slowly like persons who wished to protract the time in each other's company. At length, approaching a water, which, gushing from the rocks above, poured its crystal stream over the pathway, Agnace sat down on the trunk of a fallen tree, while Charles left her for a few minutes, and climbed up the rocks to the source of the stream, from which he presently returned with a wreath of early roses, which I afterwards saw fastened round her hat. For some time he stood before her as she sat, and then, placing himself beside her, took a book from his pocket, and began to read. All this was indistinctly seen because of the distance; but I doubt not that the book which these young people had chosen for their studies was the sacred Scriptures, in which they took a delight which indicated the comparative purity of their minds, and the accordance of feeling which existed between them. O, my sweet Agnace! how brightly dawned thy early days! How happy mightest thou have been, had thy mother been worthy of thee! But, alas! my Agnace! in vain do I now lament thee: the tears that bedew thy grave cannot restore thee.

"I became impatient on beholding this lovely pair; and I expressed my impatience to Florence, saying that I wished it were yet possible to separate them.

"'And why should it not be possible?' said Florence. 'Take Mademoiselle with you to Paris, and she may see others who may find means to make her forget the son of your sister.'

"'The son of my unworthy sister,' I said: 'yes, it shall be done; and you and I, Florence, shall prevail, no doubt, at last.'

"I then returned to the castle, whence I sent a servant in haste to tell my daughter that I was impatient of her long delay; and the servant, finding her seated where I had seen her, brought her from that valley wherein she had spent so many happy hours, and which she was never again to enter.

"This very evening we were surprised by the return of the marquis. He informed me that he had passed

through Paris in his way from the frontiers of the Low Countries, where his regiment was in garrison, and had left Bertram there, in a house which he had hired for a short time in the Place de Vendome.

"'Then,' said I, 'I hope that you will allow me and Agnace to join my son in Paris when you return.'

"'For what,' asked he, 'should you desire to go to Paris?'

"'For a little change of scene, and in order to let Agnace see a little of the world.'

"'I would rather she should see it after her marriage,' answered my husband; 'but we will speak of this matter at another time.'

"My meetings with my husband were not always the most joyful occasions, for we had learned to do without each other; but, as I had at this time a certain end to accomplish, I endeavoured to make myself as agreeable to him as possible.

"On the morning following the arrival of the marquis, while I was taking my chocolate in bed, a custom which I had long used, Florence came into my room, and, throwing herself on a chair, 'I know not what is the matter with me,' she said, 'but I have had such horrible dreams as I never before experienced. I was thinking of your journey to Paris, and I had the most strange apprehensions respecting it. I do not think I shall go with you.'

"'Wherefore?' I said: 'do you suppose that I would consent to be separated from you?'

"'No,' she answered; 'and yet I don't think that I shall go with you.'

"I looked earnestly at her: there was a wildness in her eyes which surprised me, and a crimson suffusion in her complexion which alarmed me. I asked her if she were well. 'Yes,' she answered, 'very well, I believe; but you rather surprised me yesterday by speaking so freely respecting your sister before Madame R——. Did you not know that she is intimate with her?'

"'I only repeated the story which I had heard from you; I did not exaggerate.'

"'Well,' returned Florence, 'you did, I suppose, as you judged right; but I have had strange thoughts about this conversation in the night.'

"'You seem,' said I, 'to have had many strange thoughts last night.'

"'Yes,' returned Florence, 'I feared once that I was near suffocation. Was the night very hot?'

"'Hot!' I replied, 'no—cold.'

"'Ay, cold,' she answered; 'yes, I thought it very cold.'

"I looked at her again, and in my eagerness to understand her I spilled my chocolate, on which she laughed, and then, placing her hand on her forehead, complained of a headache, and retired.

"I had no time to reflect upon all these strange things, for I wished to see my husband before he went out, and I knew that he would be impatient to reconnoitre his domains after so long an absence. I therefore arose, and dressed, and, having had a short conversation with the marquis, returned to my own apartments, where I sat down in my usual place, expecting every moment that Florence would join me, for Agnace, I well knew, was with her father.

"After having sat a short time, endeavouring to divert myself with my needlework, one of my women came to inform me that my sister was at the castle, and desired to see me. She had scarcely delivered her message, before Eglantine entered. Her manner was serious; it was evident that she had been weeping. She came near to me with a hurried step, and, stopping short at a few paces from me, she burst into tears, and seemed unable to restrain a kind of hysteric affection, by which every feature was agitated. 'What does all this mean, Eglantine?' I said.

"'It means,' she replied, 'that you have grieved, and wounded, and sorely afflicted your widowed sister. O Constance! my dear Constance! never, never could I have thought it possible that you should have injured me as you have done, had I not been assured you have done so by a person of the strictest integrity.'

"She then, with much self-command and great steadiness of manner, required me to explain all I had heard and reported respecting her.

"My conscience condemned me; I was confounded, yet enraged; and my feelings at first wholly deprived me of the power of utterance. I hesitated, stammered

out a few incoherent sentences, and then, bursting forth, asked her how she, a younger sister, and in other respects an inferior, should dare to come and catechise me thus in my own house.

"'By the right of a younger sister, dear Constance,' she said, 'by the right of a friend, and the right of that affection which I ever felt for you. Perhaps I may have been imprudent in inviting the Vicomte Desterres to my house; I have myself had some apprehensions on the subject, and was well pleased, therefore, that he did not propose to stay longer than three days. He left us this morning, and, as my son was at home the whole time, and as the vicomte was a friend of my beloved husband, now no more, I never could have supposed that even my worst enemies could have considered this visit in any other point of view than as an act of common friendship—a visit which, perhaps, had better never have taken place. But that you, my sister, should have given such a turn to the affair, is almost incredible. O Constance! dear Constance! have you acted in this instance like a sister, or like a Christian? Even granting that I had done wrong, ought you not to have counselled me apart? and if you found that I would not hearken to your counsels, it might then have been time enough to have exposed the faults of a widowed sister in the ears of strangers.'

"In this part of her discourse, Eglantine wept bitterly, and I remained silent beneath the overpowering conflict of my feelings. Which of us might have spoken first again I know not, but we were interrupted by the abrupt entrance of Florence, whose disordered head-dress conveyed the idea of a person just risen from the bed of sickness; in other respects, she was dressed as usual.

"It was a large room, and she came towards us with a firm step, carrying herself particularly erect, her hand being raised in a kind of menacing form. Never shall I forget the fierce expression of her countenance, or lose the impression of that frightful wildness of her eyes, and the angry appearance of her complexion. It was like the glare of some devouring flame bursting forth at midnight and threatening speedy destruction. Her eyes were not indeed fixed on me, but they were directed with fiery rage at my sister: for the moment was arrived, though the occasion was as yet unknown to me, in which this

miserable woman was to be permitted no longer to dissemble, but to be given up publicly to the influence of those malevolent passions which she had so long covertly indulged.

"The comtesse looked up as she approached, and ceased to weep, but, firm in conscious innocence, waited with much composure till she should speak.

"'And so,' said Florence, (addressing Eglantine,) 'you are come to persuade your sister, that you are still an afflicted widow—inconsolable for the loss of your husband—dead to the world—and having all your affections buried with the father of your children?'

"A horrible laugh terminated this address; after which, she stood for a moment, as if waiting my sister's reply. Eglantine, however, made her no answer; but rising, said, 'Sister, pardon me if I have spoken harshly, let the events of the two past days be forgotten, let us love each other as in former times; I know that I am hasty and impatient, but I soon forget an injury, and, with the Almighty's help, I will never more revert to what is past.' Thus addressing me, she stepped forward, and was offering to embrace me, when Florence seized her arm and held her back: 'Deceitful woman!' she said, 'why seek to embrace one who has ceased to love you?' And then she broke forth into renewed insults with a vehemence of manner which perfectly confounded me. I endeavoured to check her several times, but without the smallest success; and I was indeed so much confused by the truths that she uttered respecting me, and my feelings and conduct towards my sister, that I could not exert myself as I might otherwise have done. My sister seemed also equally incapable either of speaking or moving, and we both stood, the one on the one side and the other on the other of this miserable woman, till suddenly her voice became thick, her complexion varied from red to livid, and from livid to a deathlike paleness, and she sunk in strong convulsions on the floor. The shrieks which my sister and I uttered were so violent that they soon brought the servants round us, by whom the unhappy woman, still in strong convulsions, was taken up and carried to her bed. Eglantine hastened to her house, and presently sent back her shepherd, a venerable old man who was well skilled in medicine, that he might give

some immediate assistance, while we were awaiting the arrival of a physician from a town at some leagues distance.

"I was too much overcome by my own feelings, to be able or willing to follow Florence to her chamber. I was truly terrified at the state in which I had seen her, and could not help attributing her conduct and manner to some dreadful disease which had caused sudden derangement: but in this derangement she had evinced so dreadful a spirit, and had exposed me in a way so offensive, that I trembled at the idea of continuing to live with her on such intimate terms. Her death appeared to me a most desirable event, and this I so earnestly wished for, that when one of my women came to inform me that the shepherd had bled Mademoiselle de Castres, and that she was better, I could not help feeling a degree of regret. My alienation from my sister had, in the mean time, increased by the events of the morning. I had been mortified, humbled, and brought to shame before her, and I felt that I never could look up in her presence again. 'She must despise me,' I said, 'but I will not be despised; I would rather choose to be hated. And she would teach my daughter, my Agnace, to despise me: but I will prevent this—Agnace shall never enter the family of Eglantine if I have power or art to prevent it.'

"Thus resolving, I sat motionless where my sister had left me, and in one short hour, during which I was alone, suffered the pains of years.

"The physician had arrived before the marquis and my daughter returned; and when he had considered the case, he informed me that he entertained no doubt but that her complaint would prove to be the small-pox.

"I had had the small-pox in infancy I well knew, and had nursed my son and daughter through the disease: I had therefore no well-grounded fears respecting contagion. But no sooner did the physician express his apprehensions, than the idea occurred to me that I might avail myself of this occasion to promote my wishes of carrying my daughter to Paris. As soon therefore as my husband and Agnace came in, which was before the physician had left me, I began to act upon what I had planned; and when I had informed him of the sudden attack of Mademoiselle de Castres, I proceeded to say,

that out of the house I must and would go, for I felt that, if I remained where I was, I should certainly take the infection.

"'But you have had the disease, Madame,' said Agnace.

"'And you nursed your children through the complaint,' remarked my husband.

"'I know not,' I said, 'whether I have had it or not; but of this I am sure, that I shall die if I stay here, if it be only from terror and anxiety.'

"'My husband and daughter both reasoned with me, but in vain; and at length it was decided that we should leave the castle the following morning, and proceed without delay to Paris. My husband was not brought to this determination without much persuasion; and Agnace received it with a degree of discomposure which circumstances did not seem to justify. She turned pale as death, and appeared to have some difficulty in keeping herself from fainting. When left by the physician and the marquis, she rose in haste from the chair on which she had been sitting, and, throwing herself on her knees before me, 'O, my mother! my mother!' she said, 'do not yield to this panic, and leave your friend in this abrupt and hasty manner. The world has been offended at your attachment, but it will be more offended by your forsaking your friend. O! listen, dear mother, for once listen to your child!'

"'Rise, Agnace!' I said, with high indignation. 'You insinuate that my conduct is not consistent: but what can be more inconsistent than that abasing posture, and those insulting words?'

"'No, my mother, I will not rise,' said Agnace, 'till you consent to stay and take care of Mademoiselle de Castres.'

"'Do you desire my death, Agnace?' I replied.

"'You have had the small-pox, dear mamma,' she said, while her eyes streamed with tears: 'you would run no risk by remaining here. O! I entreat you, hearken to your child,' she added, (and she clasped my knees with her lovely arms,) 'and stay with your poor friend; or, if not, leave me with her. I will attend her—I have no fears.'

"'You stay!' I said. 'Artful girl!—yes, you would

willingly stay, I doubt not, and Charles de Perouse would assist you in your labour of love. You change colour!—Are you not ashamed to be thus detected? Rise from your knees; and understand, that, though you may deceive others, you cannot deceive your mother.'

"She arose at my bidding, and her face, which had been pale as death, was covered with deep blushes. 'You are ashamed, I see, Agnace,' I said.

"'I am,' she answered, 'but not ——' and she hesitated.

"'Not because you are detected?' I asked.

"'No,' she replied, 'for Heaven is my witness,' and she lifted her lovely eyes towards heaven, 'that at the moment I offered to stay and attend Mademoiselle de Castres, I had not a thought of Charles.'

"'Then why those blushes?' I asked.

"'They came unbidden,' she answered, 'but not without cause.' She sighed and wept, but said no more.

"I was engaged during the whole of the evening in making preparations for my journey, and Agnace was not with me; neither did I enquire after her, nor see her, till the morning, when she joined us at our early breakfast, with a countenance of such deathly paleness, that her father and I were both alarmed, and we hastened our departure, in hope that the change of air and scene might restore and enliven her.

"The unhappy Florence had, as I learned by making the enquiry, a miserable night, and continued to rave, with little intermission, from midnight. The farce which I was playing would not permit me to go and take leave of her; but as I was passing along the gallery to descend the stairs, her groans reached my ears, and went to my heart. I never heard her voice again. Dare I hope that she is now happy? Oh, miserable Florence! Oh, ill-fated intimacy! would it had never been!

"Agnace wept bitterly till we were some leagues distant from Roquefort, after which she fell asleep; and the extreme heaviness of her sleep, notwithstanding the motion of the carriage, first suggested to me the idea that she had been up all night with the unhappy invalid. The suspicion was agony to my mind, for it filled me with fresh reason for self-reproach; but I was then too much hardened in sin to listen to the dictates of con-

science. The head of Agnace, as she slept, reclined on her father's shoulder. He turned to her with a look of tenderness, and, placing his arm round her, held her till she awoke. They sat opposite me in the coach, and presented an affecting scene, which has often forced itself upon my recollection, producing reflections of the most painful nature.

"I shall not say much of our journey to Paris: in proportion as we became more distant from Roquefort, my spirits rose, and Agnace became more composed. At Paris we found Bertram, whom I had not seen for two years, and who was become a very fine youth in appearance and manner; but I soon perceived that he had a lofty and unaccommodating temper, with that species of sensitiveness on all points of honour which disposes young men to avail themselves of every occasion of discord.

"On the day succeeding our arrival, we received letters from the south. There was one for Agnace, which was not perused without many tears; and another from the intendant of the Castle of Roquefort, to say that the disease had broken out in Mademoiselle de Castres with such symptoms as placed her life in the greatest peril.

"I will not do myself the injustice to say that I did not feel much on the receipt of this letter: but Bertram, who was present, and who had always at once hated and despised poor Florence, soon turned my better feelings into ridicule, and insisted, that I should amuse myself with the gaieties of Paris, and endeavoured to exclude all painful sensations by the introduction of pleasurable ones.

"'That plan may do with me, Bertram,' I said; 'but it will not answer, I assure you, with Agnace.'

"'What!' he observed, 'do you mean to say that she will not easily be made to forget Charles de Perouse? Wait a little, dear mother, wait till she has seen something better. Your ideas of female constancy differ much from mine, if you suppose that Agnace will continue to be attached to De Perouse when she sees some of our first and noblest Parisian youths at her feet; for I do not doubt but that this will soon be the case, as I am persuaded my sister Agnace will be found the brightest star which has appeared for months in the hemisphere of fashion.'

"'I am glad that you think so, Bertram,' I answer-

ed; 'but I do not approve your ideas of female inconstancy.'

"'I judge from observation,' replied my son. 'The time was, when I should have said that nothing on earth could have separated you from Florence de Castres: but,'——and he smiled; then turning to a mirror, busied himself in arranging his cravat.

"Bertram had always been my favourite child, and, as I knew that I should be dependent on him in the event of his father's death, I had always made it my object to secure his affection to myself: for my selfishness was at that time excessive; and if this feeling does not now operate so powerfully with me, it is to be attributed to the efficacy of grace, by which I have been led to feel and lament the sinfulness of my nature, and to desire above all things that I may never again be left to my own propensities.

"By the suggestions and importunities of Bertram, we were soon involved in all the gaieties of our great capital, through which we conducted our lovely Agnace as a lamb prepared for sacrifice, and adorned with garlands of flowers.

"As Bertram had foreseen, she was soon sought in marriage by several persons of superior rank; among whom was one who, from his distinguished birth, superior fortune, and estimation at court, was precisely the son-in-law which an ambitious mother might desire.

"This gentleman was the Marquis de C——, who, notwithstanding the little encouragement she gave him, was so fixed in his attachment to my daughter, that he held out every possible inducement to me and my son, to ensure his success.

"Not one of these suitors of Agnace had the least chance with her father, for he dashed their hopes at once by stating that his daughter was already engaged to another. But, unfortunately for my endeared Agnace and all connected with her, when we had been in Paris little more than two months, he was obliged to leave us; and then my son contrived to renew the hopes of the Marquis de C——, a thing which there is no difficulty in doing when the heart of a lover is truly devoted. And who, that was capable of estimating character, could avoid preferring my Agnace to those flimsy persons with

which the gay world abounds? for she was a true Christian, and had all the gentleness, modesty, courtesy, and simplicity of that character.

"But I should have said that, long before this time, we had heard of the death of the miserable Florence: and what affected me more deeply than the death of this poor creature, whose tyranny I had long suffered with much impatience, was, that my sister had attended her to the very last, and had endured with unwearied patience all the loathsome circumstances attendant on this disease, wholly separating herself from her young family, lest she should convey any kind of contagion from the chamber of disease; and that she had availed herself of every interval of reason to bring this unhappy woman to a knowledge of her Saviour and to true repentance.

"It might have been expected that the knowledge of this truly Christian conduct of my sister would have made me ashamed of my evil feelings respecting her: but, alas! by giving me another cause for admiration, it increased my hatred of her; especially when I considered that it was more than probable that Florence had, either in delirium, or in seasons of repentance, laid open to her the subjects of our former conversations, which I was most anxious she should not know. But one month, or more, had passed since I had heard of the death of Florence, and my mind was then too full of ambitious prospects for my children, and schemes of hatred and revenge, to permit me to feel the event as I have since done.

"Things were in this state, the marquis still absent, and my son using every means in his power to promote the suit of the Marquis de C—— with his sister, when, one morning, as I was sitting alone, my children having rode out together towards the Bois de Boulogne, my nephew Charles de Perouse unexpectedly arrived. He appeared to be in violent agitation, although it was evident that he endeavoured to restrain himself and to accost me with some appearance of cordiality.

"'What! Charles de Perouse!' I exclaimed, 'and at Paris!'

"'Yes, Madame,' he replied; 'I am come to Paris with my sister Rosamond, who is lately become the wife of the Baron de Montauban, and we lodge at a very little distance from hence.'

"'Indeed,' I said, with great coolness, 'I did not expect that this marriage would take place so soon.'

"'And where, Madame,' said he, 'is Mademoiselle de Roquefort?' And he looked round him impatiently. 'Might I not be permitted to see her?'

"'She is not within,' I replied, still preserving a perfect indifference.

"My indifference seemed to irritate the young man more than any manner I could have possibly adopted; and, in consequence, after various struggles with himself, his feelings appeared quite to overcome him, and he caused me to understand that he was fully acquainted with the measures I was taking to separate him for ever from his beloved Agnace. The deep groans which he uttered would have melted any heart but mine; he even shed tears while he assured me that his soul was bound up in his Agnace, and he offered to take her without the smallest fortune. 'O my aunt!' he said, 'give me but my Agnace!—my Agnace, whom I have loved from my tenderest infancy—and loved without a rival—yea,' he added, 'and must love till death!'

"'And well,' I answered, 'well you may love her. Do you count it a merit to have selected the most lovely young woman in France, and one who is your superior in rank, and entitled to a noble dowry?'

"'Oh, aunt!' he replied; 'and this from you!'

"'Yes,' I said; 'and now, since the time is come for speaking the truth, permit me to say that I have always thought you presumptuous in aspiring to my daughter, and only regret that I have allowed so long a time to pass without making you acquainted with my opinion on this subject.'

"I scarcely know what answer the comte made to this speech, for he was driven beyond the bounds of prudence; and he, undoubtedly, not only used some very harsh expressions, but insinuated that he had heard me spoken of as I then appeared, but had ever before believed that I had been misrepresented.

"'Misrepresented, Charles! and by whom?'

"'It matters not,' he replied; 'sacred be the memory of the dead! But Oh, my Agnace!' he added, striking his hand on his forehead, 'I cannot, will not part with my Agnace. May I hope, Madame, that you

will tell her I have been here, and that I live only for her?'

"'And that you came only to insult her mother?' I replied. 'But depend upon it, De Perouse, you would do well to give up all thoughts of my daughter, for she has now another connexion in view, and one much more suitable than that which you propose.'

"''Tis false, Madam!' he replied, almost in a frenzy of despair.

"'Very well, Sir,' I answered; 'what more can you add after this? Since you cannot behave with the respect due to your aunt, you must permit me to say that I can no longer acknowledge you as a nephew. I then walked out of the room into an adjoining apartment, where, as I stood at a large window which opened into the street, I saw the injured young man leaving the court; and, within a quarter of an hour afterwards, I saw my daughter with her brother and the Marquis de C—— enter.

"I had been considering what measures I should take to prevent the renewal of the intercourse between Agnace and Charles, and was still unable to determine on what should be done, when the young people came in. My children instantly perceived that I had been agitated, and Bertram asked the occasion, but I waved a reply; and as the marquis had been invited to dinner, and the hour was at hand, I sat down to converse with the young gentlemen while Agnace changed her dress. I expressed a hope that they had enjoyed a pleasant excursion.

"'The day was fine and the prospects beautiful,' replied the marquis; 'but your sweet daughter, Madame, had a cloud on her brow: she seemed to be offended at my joining the party, and plainly told me that I might spare all trouble on her account, as she considered herself as not being at liberty to bestow her hand on any man but the one chosen by her father.'

"'Upon my word,' I said, in high displeasure against Agnace, 'she treated you with some freedom!'

"'She did so,' replied the marquis; 'and I only wish I could cease to think of her.'

"'But I trust,' I said, 'that you will not give her up. Her obstinacy shall be overcome: the young man to whom she is attached is unworthy of her; his mother has used me ill, and he has treated me with the greatest indignity.'

I would have added more, but the entrance of Agnace compelled us to change the subject.

"Agnace appeared perfectly composed during dinner; and when the marquis addressed her, answered with ease, supposing, no doubt, that she had entirely put an end to his expectations respecting her: but Bertram appeared flushed and angry, and, while forcing himself to appear easy, drank a much larger portion of wine than usual.

"About eight o'clock the marquis took his leave; and we were no sooner left by ourselves than Bertram broke out, and, though in my presence and his sister's, uttered some of those imprecations, which are too often in the mouths of fashionable young men, on his aunt and her whole family; adding, 'I am sure from your manner, Madame, that some disagreeable circumstances have arisen from this quarter since the morning.'

"'You have conjectured truly,' I replied; and then gave him the account of Charles's visit, exaggerating to the utmost all that had been rash and unadvised in the conduct of the young man, and adding, that his mother had made use of her opportunities with Florence de Castres to obtain a knowledge of every secret of my heart.

"As I proceeded, Bertram became more and more inflamed, and gave utterance to his passion by more awful expressions, while Agnace implored me with tears to refrain from further mention of these subjects.

"'And De Perouse insulted you!' said Bertram, 'and his mean mother has basely obtained the knowledge of your secrets! By Heaven!' and he added other and more daring oaths, 'I will make the man who can insult a lady to feel that he is not to do so with impunity!' So saying, he started from his seat, but Agnace, quick as thought, had seized his arm, and was imploring him to have patience, to take a moment for reflection, and to hear what she had to say. He shook off her hand, and called her low-minded and base: but she, falling on her knees, clasped her arms around him, and would have drawn him down to his seat. 'Hear me!—only hear me, Bertram!' she said; ''tis of no use that you attempt to interfere between me and Charles de Perouse, for here, here I solemnly swear, that I will never, never marry any

man but him; and his death, no, not even his death shall separate us!'

"'Frantic girl!' I exclaimed, 'hold, hold! refrain your impious oaths!'

"'I have uttered them,' she replied, 'they are registered in heaven. And now, Bertram, do your worst: but no, no, my brother! do not let your anger burn against the friend of your childhood! O, my brother! if ever I was dear to you'—— She would have added more, but he tore himself away, and rushed from the room.

"All this was but the work of a minute, and left me no time either to reflect or act.

"Bertram had scarcely closed the door after him, when Agnace falling in a deadly swoon on the floor, my immediate attention was called to her. I shrieked aloud, the servants rushed in, they lifted Agnace on a sofa. We bathed her temples, and applied volatile spirits; after which, she revived, uttered a deep sigh, and then looked around her: but seeing me, she started up, and, with a wildness of expression which terrified me, she exclaimed, 'Well, have you done, barbarous woman? unnatural mother!—Yet now, now!' she added, springing from her couch, 'it may not be too late! Stop him! Stop him! Hold his hand!' and was then hastening towards the door, when my female servants, clasping her in their arms, prevented her from rushing into the street in this condition; and being thus restrained, she burst into tears, and seemed to recover herself a little.

"All this time I was so blinded by prejudice and passion, that I actually had not yet foreseen what was most likely to be the consequence of what I had done, in allowing my son to seek his cousin in such a state of irritation and intoxication; neither did the terrible idea occur to me, till Agnace, being a little restored, was able to speak connectedly, and to entreat me, without losing a moment, to send after Bertram, and prevent, if possible, a meeting between him and Charles.

"'What do you apprehend?' I asked.

"'Murder!' she replied, with returning wildness; 'and then you will have well done, in forsaking the woman's part, and thus acting the incendiary in your own house.'

"'O, Agnace!' I exclaimed, with horror, 'and this from you!'

"'What have I said? What have I done?' cried my unhappy daughter, and she put her hand to her forehead. 'Have I insulted my mother? O, my reason! my reason! Is it gone for ever? Lay not what I have said to my account, O, my God!' and she wept again, at the same time imploring me to send some one to call her brother.

"I was by this time thoroughly terrified: the idea of a duel between the young men had never occurred to me, and I now became as anxious to recall Bertram, and tranquillize his mind, as I had before been to excite him: I therefore sent every man among my domestics to seek him.

"When this had been done, Agnace became more calm, though she continued to weep without intermission.

"It was now dark, but the windows were left open. Such was the confusion and disorder of the family, that one solitary light only was burning on the table. All was silent within the house and offices, which were almost empty; the females, with the exception of my own maid, having, by my desire, betaken themselves to the porter's lodge, to be ready to admit Bertram as soon as he should appear.

"My maid, whom I had brought from Roquefort, and who had been long in the family, was standing by Agnace, and was holding her head on her bosom trying to console her; and I sat at a distance, suffering within a short space of time more real misery than I had ever experienced through the whole of my former life.

"It was then, at that dreadful, most dreadful period, that I was first convinced of the long course of sin in which I had indulged; and now that the terrible consequences of my wickedness began to unfold themselves, I was filled with a degree of horror and remorse which admit of no description.

"Till that miserable moment I had believed myself an exemplary character, a self-denying, economical, and domestic wife; but I was then forced to acknowledge, at least to my own heart, that the individual who in retirement nurtures uncharitable and angry feelings, is often

more guilty in the sight of God, than those trifling or profligate characters, whose errors are open to the whole world.

"Two miserable hours passed in these sad reflections, during which time the sobs of Agnace had become less audible, and I had almost hoped that she had fallen asleep on the bosom of the faithful servant.

"At length the clocks of various steeples in the neighbourhood announced the hour of midnight, and a moment afterwards a noise was heard below. Agnace started up, and uttered a faint shriek; at the same instant, Bertram rushed into the room, pale, disordered, and wild, and coming up to me, 'Now, Madam,' he said, 'you are revenged, and I trust that you are satisfied. And would to God,' he added, as he ungirt his sword from his side, and threw it to the further end of the room, 'would to God I had also died!'

"Agnace had risen as her brother entered, her fair hair dishevelled and wet with the water which had been applied to her temples. She had stepped swiftly up to her brother, and stood looking at him with a fixed and dreadful calmness; and when he uttered these words, 'Would to God I had also died,' she turned to me, and said, 'I knew it; I have long known it; I have been long prepared for it; it has been working on to this for many long years, and now it is complete. I well knew where I should keep my bridal day; but you will not be present, mother.'

"'Agnace!' I exclaimed, 'Agnace, my child!'

"She took no notice of me, but turned to Bertram. 'Brother,' she said, 'I would have spared you this guilt, but God give you repentance and forgiveness. And now,' she added, 'finish your work, take up your sword and shorten the hour of separation, the time for lingering here; for I must go;' and she pointed to her bosom, as if she would have directed him where to strike.

"Bertram was unable to speak: he had thrown himself on a chair, and his groans were more dreadful, even than the unnatural composure of Agnace. I would have taken his hand, but he drew it from me. 'You are my mother,' he said, 'else, I could'—— and then he paused. 'But I was mad,' he added; 'I was intoxicated; and you, my mother, you provoked me.—But my Agnace,

my sweet Agnace!' and he looked with ineffable tenderness towards her, and seemed as if he would have embraced her, but recoiled, as if unworthy.

"Agnace still stood in one posture, becoming more and more pale, and fixed like some lovely marble figure. At length, heaving a deep and long-drawn sigh, she fell slowly back, her eyes, which were directed upward, becoming, at the same instant, fixed as in the instance of a dying person. The arms of her brother received her as she fell, and I, the miserable, thrice miserable mother, stood a silent witness of this terrific scene.

"My unhappy daughter was no sooner laid on the couch, than her limbs began to be agitated by convulsive motions, and it was necessary to seek a physician. Bertram still held her as she lay; but there was a fixed and dreadful expression of sorrow in his countenance, which I could never forget. I again addressed him, but he refused to answer me; and when the physician entered, he, without hesitation, accounted to him for the dreadful condition of his sister, by informing him of the crime he had rashly committed.

"'And is the young man actually dead, Sir?' enquired the physician.

"'I know not,' he replied: 'I left him fainting and bleeding with his companions, while I returned to boast of what I had done where I thought my boastings would be acceptable;' (and his fiery eyes were fixed on me;) 'and yet I blame no one, Sir, but myself,' he added. 'I was intoxicated; I was irritated. I went out to seek the comte; and I found him but too soon. I insulted him; I drew upon him. He was compelled to do the same in self-defence. I wounded him—I believe I killed him—murdered him, though he was my friend—my brother. And now that I am sobered, that my unjust anger is evaporated, I am left to the effect of my own precipitation. I shall be presently seized by the arm of justice, and shall be condemned to death.'

"This was more than I could bear. I shrieked aloud, but no one attended to me. The physician was giving directions respecting Agnace: he had ordered a surgeon to be sent for to bleed her, and the operation was performed during a stupor into which she had fallen. A large quantity of blood was taken from her before she

opened her eyes. The physician and my maid then spoke to her, but she made no answer. I then addressed her with every endearing epithet I could think of, but she took no notice. The physician administered a cordial to her, and desired her couch might be taken nearer a window which opened into a garden which was flanked by the lofty groves of the Champs Elysees.

"That unhappy morning was beginning to dawn, and the birds were commencing their flutterings in the boughs; the gales were enlivening, and laden with the fragrance of flowers; but my Agnace was never more to revive by the freshness of that air, which she was wont to inhale with so much delight on the acclivities of her native hills.

"The surgeon was gone, and the physician began earnestly to persuade my son to conceal himself from justice.

"'No!' said my son, sternly; 'I value my life so little now, that I am ready to give it up, if justice requires.'

"'But for my sake, Bertram!' I said.

"He looked down, but made no answer.

"'For your father's sake!'——

"He looked fiercely at me. 'Don't mention him,' he said: 'we should have thought of him some hours since.'

"Agnace sighed. We were a little withdrawn from the couch, and returned to it again on hearing this sigh. 'Sweet Agnace,' I said, 'are you better?'

"'My father did you say?' she answered; 'my poor father! tell him'—

"'What, my child?' I asked.

"'Tell him,'—and she hesitated—'tell him his Agnace is happy: yet not happy. Charles was a Christian; how could he return your injuries, Bertram?'

"'He did not, my beloved Agnace; he did not, my sweet sister; the fault was all mine.'

"'Thank God!' she said, lifting up her lovely eyes: 'but O, Bertram!' (and she looked at him,) 'have you quite forgotten God?'

"She then seemed to be unconscious, and, closing her eyes, we hoped she was sleeping, till informed by renewed convulsions that this repose was not natural and refreshing. The physician applied other remedies, after which the convulsions left her, and she became tranquil;

but, after this second attack, her countenance became appalling: death appeared, to me, to sit on every line of her lovely face; yet the physician gave us some hope.

"The morning was now broken, and never, perhaps, shone on a more miserable family. The noble countenance of Bertram was scarcely less changed than his sister's, and the disorder of his dress was rendered more dreadful by a few spots of blood which were discernible upon it. 'And will you not resolve upon something, Monsieur Roquefort,' said the physician, 'or will you empower me to go and enquire after the young man whom you left bleeding in the street? He may not be dead; and then you will be relieved from one source at least of woe.'

"While we were hesitating on this proposition, (for Bertram seemed to dread to receive a confirmation of his cousin's death,) we heard a noise below; and the next instant, the door of the room being open, we were fixed in amazement by the entrance of young De Perouse himself, pale indeed, and having his arm in a scarf, but far from bearing the appearance of a man desperately wounded.

"Never, never shall I forget the moment when the two cousins, rushing into each other's arms, cancelled all past offences by one cordial embrace, from which they did not relax till they had sworn a friendship which, from that day to this, has never known a variation.

"Then all might have been well, if the arrow shot from the envenomed tongue had not wounded in a direction where it had least been intended. But I bow beneath the decrees of the Almighty; and if my punishment is only to continue with this life, I shall have reason to praise redeeming love through all eternity.

"Bertram, in hastening to meet Charles, had intercepted the view of the couch where Agnace lay from De Perouse; but no sooner had this cordial reconciliation taken place, than he asked for Agnace, and was directed to her by the expressive glances of every individual present.

"He turned pale as death as he approached the couch, and then exclaimed, with an expression of horror such as I had never before seen, 'Oh, my Agnace! Can this be Agnace?'

"At the sound of his voice she opened her eyes, and the last faint glow that ever reddened those lovely cheeks was diffused over her countenance. 'Agnace, my beloved!' he repeated in a tone of tenderness; 'my sweet Agnace, I am come.'

"'I see you, my beloved,' she answered; 'I have been expecting you; we shall not be separated, though now we shall have another object of purer and holier affection. My heart is preparing for this higher love.'

"'My lovely one,' he said, sitting down on the chair by her couch, 'I do not understand you. What has brought you to this state? Was it terror? was it grief? Do you not still love your Charles?'

"'Yes,' she replied, trying to raise her head, 'no mortal ever rivalled you in my affection. I may say it now, for temporal things are past. It was you that first led me to the knowledge of those things which now constitute my happiness, as we walked amidst those beautiful valleys, by the murmuring streams. It was there you taught my infant tongue to lisp the praises of the Redeemer. But the memory of my native hills is passing from my view; and new scenes of glory have caused those beloved objects to fade away. Do I not now behold the Everlasting Hills?' She then made a new effort to raise herself; on which, he passed his arm under her head. Of this, however, she seemed unconscious; but, clasping her hands, and then suddenly relaxing her grasp, her head sunk back on his arm, and she expired, leaving her mother, her brother, and her beloved Charles, incapable, for a length of time, of receiving any consolation.

"That grief and terror should so soon have deprived so young a person of life remained a matter of astonishment to the physician, till he ascertained that an important blood-vessel had broken within, by which, in fact, she had been suffocated, never having been able to throw up the blood, though she had more than once evidenced those symptoms which attend persons who are burdened by sickness.

"But what relief could it bring, although thus enabled to ascertain the way in which death had effected its dreadful work! Our Agnace was no more;—this unhappy truth could not be disputed; and I had been the cause of her death. The indulgence of my own evil

passions had robbed me of a daughter, and of such a daughter! O, my Agnace! my lost, my lovely one! But now my courage fails me; my pen refuses to record the scene which followed, when it was ascertained that our beloved one was really departed, or to enlarge upon the sufferings of her affectionate father.

"I must needs hasten over the remainder of my story. After the death of my invaluable daughter, my husband refused for a length of time to be reconciled to me. I therefore withdrew to a house he possessed in Pau, and there have lived as a widow to this day, though twenty years are past since the remains of my lovely child were committed to the dust in the funeral vault at Roquefort.

"The marquis and Bertram continued to pursue the profession of arms till within the last ten years; at which time they returned to Roquefort, where my son was united to Sophia, the only daughter who was then unmarried of my sister. This amiable young lady used her influence so effectually to produce a reconciliation between me and my husband, that he consented to see me at Pau a little before his death, (for he is now no more,) and we were then cordially reconciled.

"My son has been blessed with four sons, and a second Agnace has at length been granted to the family; and their infant daughter promises to bloom with all the external beauties of my long-lamented offspring.

"Charles de Perouse has never forgotten his Agnace, nor ever formed a second attachment. After the dreadful scene in Paris, he returned to his widowed mother, and devoted himself entirely to supplying her with consolation, to educate his younger brothers and sisters, and to promote the happiness of his dependents.

"My sister was long before she could endure to see me after the death of Agnace, who was so greatly beloved by her: but time having worn away all painful impressions, she now frequently visits me, and her warm heart glows, I have reason to think, as formerly, with tender affection for her only sister.

"I have never again visited Roquefort; but, through the divine mercy, and in a life of religious seclusion, I have obtained some tranquillity of mind, and I dare not endanger it by the review of scenes so dear and fascinating to me. It is enough for me to behold the Pyrenees

from the window of my old-fashioned mansion, which is situated just without the walls of the venerable palace of the ancient kings of Navarre. It is not here that the mountains have their greatest elevation, or that their snowy summits seem to pierce the clouds; but it is here that they have the greatest variety in their forms, and the beautiful lake which spreads at their feet adds not a little to the charms of the prospect.

"The remembrance of time passed among these hills, of my visits with my sister to the cottage of Marguerite, and the gambols of my infant children in their early days, often impress me, as I view the lovely prospect before me: filling me occasionally with bitter remorse; but as these painful reflections are connected with the pleasing hopes, inspired by redeeming love, which are sometimes afforded to me through infinite mercy, they are the means of diffusing a tender melancholy over my heart, and of making me more eager for that time in which faith and hope will be swallowed up in the fruition of everlasting glory."

When the lady of the manor had concluded her history of Agnace Roquefort, she explained to her young people the lesson which they were to learn from the sufferings of the marquise, and her deserved punishment. "We all, my dear children," added she, "know, that, as Christians, it becomes us to forgive others their trespasses as we would hope to be forgiven, and there are none here present who would not look on an act of revenge with horror; and yet, who among us is guiltless of the sin of resenting petty affronts, or of allowing ourselves to indulge an uncharitable feeling towards our neighbours, whenever they appear less devoted to our service, or less attentive to pay us the respect to which we think we are entitled? Females especially are, I believe, disposed to inflame and irritate each other against their neighbours by empty and unmeaning gossip, which takes place too often when the fingers are plying the needle. Hence the advantage of literary conversation in society, and the very great difficulty which is found of amusing large parties, and even smaller ones, from which professedly worldly amusements are banished: for, in instances of a mixed society, of different ages and sexes, (allowing each

individual to be pious,) religious conversation is apt to degenerate either into flatness on the one hand, or asperity on the other; and if the leader or head of the company is not endowed with very rare and peculiar talents for promoting suitable conversation, such meetings are seldom agreeable, and still more seldom profitable."

The young ladies agreed with this remark, and asked the lady of the manor if she could propose any thing which could be substituted in society in the place of the cards and dancing, which the religious world had rejected.

The lady of the manor replied, that many substitutes might be adopted, were young people properly educated: "but," added she, "this is a difficult subject; and, as I am not now prepared to give my opinion upon it, I will defer it to another occasion. At present, I would satisfy myself by endeavouring to impress, in the most solemn manner, upon your minds, the sin of that unprofitable and injurious gossip, in which our sex are too much disposed to indulge: to say the least on such a subject, it is a waste of precious time; but it is often productive of more baneful consequences, in the degradation of character, and in the destruction of all the principles of domestic and of individual happiness."

The lady then called upon her young people to join her in prayer.

*Prayer on the Subject of Forgiveness of Injuries.*

"O SAVIOUR of Mankind and Prince of Peace, who, through the sacrifice of thyself once offered, hast restored peace to a fallen world; grant unto us that charity which is greater than faith and hope. Enable us continually to bear in mind, that as we are polluted ourselves, so also are our fellow-creatures; and that no intercourse can be carried on with them, without mutual occasions of offence. Enable us, therefore, O blessed Redeemer, to forgive as we would be forgiven; and, whereas an uncharitable spirit is apt to arise in our hearts, give us grace to resist the first motions of unkindness which may be felt towards our neighbours. Help us to acknowledge the danger and sin of such feelings, and place a restraint on our tongues to prevent the utterance of any unkind expres-

sion. Endue us, blessed Lord, with that knowledge which may lead us to be thankful for the smallest acts of kindness; and impress us with the conviction, that even of *these* we are not worthy. Divest us, O blessed Lord, of that selfishness which is inherent in our fallen nature, and which mixes itself even with our religious duties. O deliver us from a party spirit, and make us more and more anxious for thy honour, and zealous only for thy glory. Let it be the constant subject of our thoughts, not so much how we are treated by our neighbours, as in what manner we may best promote their happiness and comfort, and how we may devote our time and talents to their service and thy glory. Thus enable us to await the time, when true Christians shall be for ever one, and no disunion shall be found among thy members.

"To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be glory now and for evermore. Amen."

# CHAPTER XXVIII.

Second Conversation on the Lord's Prayer—"Lead us not into Temptation."

"I HAVE promised you, my dear young people," said the lady of the manor, when next the party met, "to furnish you with a story on the subject of temptations. I shall now fulfil my engagement, without any other preface than to remind you, that our Lord's expression, 'Lead us not into temptation,' by no means asserts that the Almighty tempts us, for we are tempted and drawn aside by our own evil inclinations. *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.* (James i. 13, 14.) I will now leave my little history to speak for itself."

## THE BEAUTIFUL ESTELLE.

"An interval of quiet, and a space for reflection on the past, after the experience of many and various tossings on the tempestuous sea of life, being permitted me, ere my departure from the present scene of things, I am inclined to avail myself of it, in order to arrange certain papers which have long lain by me, relative to a lady, with whose history my own is intimately connected, and to furnish such additions to her narrative as few are so able to supply as myself; my motive for so doing not being to afford amusement to the idle reader, but to hold up a warning to youth, and to shew the very dreadful effects of a presumptuous and self-confiding spirit. There are no promises contained in Scripture for the

consolation of the proud; whereas we are assured that God will guide those in judgment who are meek, and that he will teach his way to such as are gentle. (Ps. xxv. 9.) A high and independent spirit appears to have been the original cause of every affliction which I am about to record; and the occasions of humbling this spirit were as the rending of the rocks and the stilling of the raging sea.

"But not to anticipate.—I must commence by informing my reader that I am a minister of the Reformed Church, and formerly, that is, before the fatal period of the general and systematic dissemination of infidelity on the Continent, was the curé of a small parish in the Pays de Vaud, and had the superintendence of a little congregation in one of those lovely and solitary valleys of the Alps which, through many long ages of papal darkness and tyranny, had afforded a place of retreat to those who, retaining a more pure doctrine, could not be tolerated under the reigning form of ecclesiastical government.

"In this valley the humble inhabitants had preserved a degree of Christian simplicity which would not have disgraced the apostolic ages, till the middle of the last century; not only shut out from the rest of the world by the dent de Midi et de Mordi, but by lesser mountains, rocks, and precipices, forests and wilds, peculiarly their own, which, rendering the approach more difficult, seemed almost to preclude the visits of affluent strangers.

"The people in my small parish were poor, living on the produce of their flocks, herds, and beehives, abiding in thatched dwellings, and looking up to their pastor as the first of human beings. Though now so far removed from this abode, in which I have experienced so many peaceful days, yet I still could fancy myself standing on the breezy heights above my house, where I could look down upon the vale below and see the wooden spire of the village church, elevated above the trees, and surrounded by the humble dwellings of the peasants, the thatched roofs of some of which were only visible; the hills, with their many irregular peaks and table lands, rising in the back-ground. The spot, indeed, was lovely, and is fixed for ever on the tablet of my memory.

"But even this sequestered region—this region which possessed so few attractions for a worldly-minded indi-

vidual, was, at length, visited by some who made it their business to spread the poison of infidelity and false philosophy, and who at length too well succeeded in doing that which the utmost rancour of popish violence could not effect.

"I was not a young man when I was appointed to this situation. I succeeded, in my ministry, a venerable pastor of the family of the holy and faithful John Claude, who, at the time of the persecution occasioned by the revocation of the Edict of Nantz, was obliged to forsake his country, and seek an asylum in remote regions.

"My predecessor, Erasmus Claude, was born and educated in England. He was by no means so poor as the ministers of our Swiss churches generally are. He was a man of decided piety, and possessed an accurate and deep knowledge of Scripture; but had a romantic and enthusiastic turn of mind, which rendered him less fit for those duties in which plain sense is a powerful auxiliary.

"Erasmus Claude had married an elegant and beautiful woman, such as we do not often see among the wives of the pastors of the Alpine villages; but she had died early, leaving her husband with one daughter, who afterwards became so distinguished for her personal attractions, that she was generally known by the name of The Beautiful Estelle.

"I have seen a portrait of this young lady, taken at the time when she must have been in the height of her beauty: she was represented in the character of a shepherdess; the idea having been probably taken from the pastorals of Florian, whose favourite shepherdess is Estelle.

"If this picture was a faithful portraiture of the lady, I can conceive nothing more beautiful than she must have been, and cannot wonder at the admiration which she is said to have excited.

"Much has been said of the transient nature of beauty; and the charms of youth have been compared, not only to the flowers which presently fade, but to the glories of the morning and the tints of the rainbow which disappear while the eye is resting upon them. The beauty of the human face, when that face is illuminated by intellectual worth, however, surpasses the beauties of

flowers and the tints of the sky as much in duration as in degree; and there are certain expressions of the countenance which even old age cannot destroy. I have seen the beauty of holiness beaming forth amid the ravages of disease, and have traced the mild lineaments of peace and love divine, even amidst the rackings of pain. In beholding these effects of religion, our thoughts may be led heavenward, and we may learn to magnify the Creator, in the contemplation of his more delicate, as well as his more sublime works; and from such fair examples of the human face and character, we may judge what man was ere yet contaminated by sin.

"Erasmus Claude departed this life when his daughter was in her nineteenth year. Immediately after his death, she married Theodore Comte de Barfleur, a nobleman of France, with whom she became acquainted in a manner which I shall explain hereafter, and with him she left the house of her father.

"I entered on my curé very soon after her departure: and I found every mouth filled with the mention of the Comtesse de Barfleur, some speaking of her with interest as the child of their late pastor, and some mentioning her with distaste as a young woman of great pride; but all extolling her rare and singular loveliness of appearance.

"I found my parishioners, notwithstanding every exertion which had been made by my predecessor, in a state of religious declension, though many deplored the loss of the simplicity and purity of former times. The more opulent inhabitants had for some years past been in the habit of sending their children to be educated at Lausanne, or of placing them out in apprenticeship to the merchants of Geneva; and these young men, when they returned to see their parents, or to settle at home, lost no opportunities of disseminating those hateful principles of infidelity with which all the more refined parts of the Continent were already poisoned. There was a great scarcity of Bibles among us at that period, a scarcity, which from the poverty of those few who still held fast the profession of the faith, it was not possible to remove; while the infidels, in the mean time, spared no labour or expence in propagating their principles and disseminating their books.

"When speaking with one of the oldest men in my con-

gregation on the state of my people, he informed me, that my predecessor had dated the beginning of corruption in the village to the sale of certain lands in the valley, which in former times had belonged to a respectable family in Lausanne, but had been more recently occupied by tenants of inferior degree, who, living by their labour, were neither above nor below in circumstances the other inhabitants of the village. These lands had, however, been sold about the middle of the last century, to a gentleman of some consequence in Geneva, who, being delighted with the situation, had built a lodge which he used for a summer residence. I call this building a lodge, not knowing what other appellation to bestow upon it.

"The edifice was constructed in the form of a large tent, such as are used in the East, where it is contrived that the outer covering should terminate in an open verandah. The materials of this building were of white or grey stone, and the pillars which supported the verandah, of polished marble, supplied by a neighbouring quarry; the whole of the building presented at a small distance the appearance of a shepherd's tent, such as are seen on the mountains of Switzerland, compacted of stone, for the use of the shepherds, when they drive their flocks in the summer season to the thymy uplands of the mountains.

"Within this mansion there were many large and handsome apartments, and every ornament which sculpture could supply. The situation of the edifice was an alp or mountain pasture ground. A peak of the hill crowned with turrets of rock which seemed to pierce the very clouds, formed the northern boundary of this alp, while a belt of pine traversed it on every other side, sweeping around its whole circumference, and extending its majestic line of shade to the very margin of a lake, which in the bottom of the valley reflected in its clear bosom all the glories of the surrounding country. Various streams of pure water gushed from the lofty regions above the lodge, and urged their way into the valley in various directions, presenting in their passage all the varieties of the murmuring brook, the foaming cascade, and the sparkling waterfall; sometimes hiding themselves as it were capriciously among the brambles, sedges, and the obscurity of coppices, and again bursting forth

to view, forming mirrors for every beam of light which sun or moon might supply.

"I speak not of the lesser beauties which encompassed this charming place, or attempt to describe the garlands of roses, eglantine, columbine, and wild pink, which adorned the shelves of the rocks and uplands of these lovely regions, and spread their fragrance through the whole air, supplying food for the multitude of bees which wing their flight perpetually through the warmer portions of Switzerland.

"The only approach to this lodge, or indeed to the valley itself, was through an exceedingly narrow gorge, formed by a chasm in the hills. These hills being rocky and ragged, had, in one place, formed a kind of archway over the pass, by the tumbling of huge fragments of stone from the heights. The peasants had formed a pathway over these fragments, and nature had enriched this natural arch with innumerable saxifrages, some of which hung in light festoons from the rock. In the very bottom of the valley, which was every where encircled by hills of a moderate height, was a clear lake about a league in circumference. The village church, with its white spire and its little burying ground, occupied an open and green spot on the shores of this lake; and the intermediate ground, between the church and the woods, which surrounded the lodge, was occupied by the thatched cottages of the village; the habitation of the pastor, in which I dwelt, being a little above the other houses, and nearer the lodge. The hills on the opposite side of the lake, though occupied with human habitations, pasture grounds, and vineyards, were richly embellished with forest trees; and, beyond these, on a clear day, were frequently seen the remote peaks of the snowy mountains; sometimes sparkling in the sunbeams like pillars of adamant, and again assuming a rosy hue calculated to impress the beholder with the simplicity and grandeur of divine operations.

"But in allowing my imagination to wander over these scenes of beauty, to which I conceive that nothing on earth can be comparable, I forget the design for which I took up my pen, and find myself too distant from the pursuit of my original purpose.

"The primary occupant of the lodge of which I am

speaking, was an elderly citizen of Geneva. It next became the property of his son, a spendthrift and a profligate, who was seen but once in our valley: the next who was in possession of it was a French nobleman, whom I shall call the Marquis de Nemours, not choosing to give his real name. This nobleman only once visited the valley; but this single visit, as it was protracted for several months, was fatal to the peace of many, who had before enjoyed that comfort which results from the actual ignorance of great wickedness.

"It was during the last year of my predecessor's life that this visit was paid; and though the marquis himself, as an individual, could not be supposed to have spread the contagion of sin into many families; yet what the individual could not effect, was widely brought to pass by his many visiters, his numerous profligate companions, and his still more abandoned train of attendants.

"I have often heard my parishioners speak of the confusion excited in the village at the period of the visit of the marquis and his associates at the lodge. There, as in the instance of Ferney, it was the object of each to make the most of this life, and to annihilate the hopes of a better; and thus our woods and mountains, which for years past had afforded a peaceful retreat to those, who, during the height of papal power, had been as a light shining in darkness, became the haunts of the impious blasphemer and daring libertine. For although the higher ranks of those who visited the lodge, did not perhaps enter much into conversation with the villagers, yet such persons never lack a large train of followers, who, in imitation of their masters' profligacy, take a delight in spreading the contagion of their impieties in their own peculiar circles. Hence, it followed, that numbers of the young people of the village learned those pernicious sentiments during the residence of the family of the marquis with us, which they never forgot. Some of them became dissatisfied, and left their homes never to return; and others, who did return, only brought back with them those corrupt habits and opinions which, by dissemination, continually increased the evil, and at length contributed to bring forward that state of confusion in which our unhappy country is now almost universally involved.

"On my first arrival in my parish, I was made aware of the corruptions which had infected my flock. I do not say but I might have done more to stem the torrent of infidelity which was breaking in upon us: but I had great difficulties, the chief of which was, the very great scarcity of Bibles among us, and our inability to procure them at the very time when the enemy was pouring in upon us every kind of infidel publication almost without money and without price. I was enabled, however, through the divine blessing, to lead back many individuals, who had become perplexed by sceptical notions, into the right way; and during my ministry I consigned many to the peaceful grave who enjoyed the hope of a happy resurrection. Nevertheless, the enemy seemed to prevail: our society gradually departed from its original simplicity, children became self-willed, and supported their own opinions in contradiction to those of their parents, and the hoary head, though found in the way of holiness, was no longer looked upon with respect.

"It was, I think, in the tenth year of my ministry, in the season of summer, and towards the close of the day, as I was taking the air on one of the breezy heights above my house, that I met an old man who had for some years past had the charge of the marquis's concerns in the neighbourhood. He saluted me, as his manner was, and informed me that he had been engaged with his wife in airing and cleaning the lodge, having had notice that some of his lord's family might speedily be expected. This was no welcome news to me, and I put many anxious questions to the old man, which he was unable to answer satisfactorily. In the mean time we walked up towards the lodge, the doors and windows of which were all open. I had never been within this building, as it had always been shut up, and I now looked towards it with a kind of dread, thinking what mischief had already issued from it to our poor villagers; my mind recurring to the history of my predecessor's daughter, the beautiful Estelle, whose fate was still involved in mystery. As I passed round the house and looked in at the open windows, I caught a glimpse of several articles of splendid furniture: superb beds with their gilded canopies, looking-glasses, sofas, pictures, and statuary in various proportions. Turning, however, from these, I began to

descend from the hill, and presently approached a point, from which I could observe the gorge in its whole length as my eye glanced under the arch of the rock. Here, while I stood meditating awhile, I remarked several horsemen who were preceding a litter, the way not being passable for a wheeled carriage, and behind this litter other persons whom the distance prevented me from exactly distinguishing.

"'Here,' I said, 'come the visiters to the lodge, and new calamities, I fear, to our unhappy village;' and as I spoke I turned hastily to my own house, in order that I might not meet the cavalcade which approached rapidly up the glen.

"The arrival of this party at the lodge excited much talk in the village: but it was several days before we were informed that the person who had been brought in the litter was a lady, who, being in extreme bad health, had been advised to try the quiet and refreshing air of the mountains.

"For several weeks, no more was heard of this unhappy person, who was represented as being in a very languishing condition. At length it was whispered abroad, that this lady was no other than the beautiful Estelle, the unfortunate daughter of my predecessor, but what was the reason of her return to this place no one could conjecture.

"It is not easy to describe the sensation which this suspicion excited in the minds of those among us who had known and honoured her father. Neither could we imagine wherefore, if she chose to come among us again, she should not make her arrival known to some of her old acquaintance, or why, if she were in so feeble a state as she was represented to be, she should not wish for such spiritual advice and consolation, as I, her father's successor, might be enabled to supply. We knew that she had married the Comte de Barfleur, and we had not heard of her becoming a widow. Why then was she in the house of the Marquis de Nemours? where was her husband? and why was she left only with servants? We put many questions on this subject to the old man who had the charge of the marquis's affairs in the village, but he could give us no satisfaction: alleging, that his orders went no further than to open the house to the lady and her train,

and to supply them with what they required; that he had never been amditted into the interior of the lodge since their arrival; and that what he had seen of the persons attending the lady was little to their credit.

"Thus we were still left in doubt respecting the identity of the lady at the lodge with the daughter of the pastor Claude, and we were so uneasy on the subject, that we used various means to obtain a sight of her. Several of the elder women of the village, who had remembered the lovely Estelle, went up to the lodge with small presents of fruit, flowers, and honey, as offerings to the stranger lady; requesting at the same time to be permitted to see her: but though the presents were accepted, they were invariably told that the lady was too ill to see any one. One of these good women, however, on one occasion, saw a beautiful child playing in the verandah; and on her attempting to speak to her, she was suddenly taken up into the arms of her attendant and carried into the interior of the house, while the little creature screamed and struggled with passion. This was not, however, so speedily effected, but that the poor woman had leisure to notice the physiognomy and general appearance of the child; and she did not hesitate to say, that the child could be no other than that of the beautiful Comtesse de Barfleur.

"On hearing this, I hesitated no longer, but sent a small billet offering my services to the sick lady, and soliciting the honour of being permitted to see her. I received a verbal answer, stating that the lady was too ill to see any stranger.

"In the mean time, as our assurances became every day stronger concerning the identity of this lady, the servants having been heard to address the child by the name of Estelle; and being persuaded that the lady herself was in a dying condition, and fearing, at the same time, that she was in a lamentable state with respect to religious matters, I was resolved at all events to gain admittance to her, hoping that I might be made useful in bringing her into the fold of Christ, from which there was reason to fear that she must have wandered very very far. Accordingly, I again and again presented myself at the door of the lodge to enquire after the lady, and was each time received by a servant of the marquis, who seemed to be

possessed of supreme authority in the household—an elderly man of respectable appearance, but one who was, it can be little doubted, deeply versed in the ways of sin.

"On my repeated applications, I was at length told by this person, that it was his lord's orders that the lady should not be disturbed. 'And pray,' said I, 'under what title does your lord presume to exercise such authority over this lady?'

"To this question I received no direct reply: a circumstance which made me more solicitous than ever to see the lady, to speak with her on religious subjects, and to extricate her from a situation which I could not think upon but with painful anxiety.

"Under these impressions, I watched every opportunity of gaining admission to this unhappy lady; and one Lord's-day, after the morning service, as I was returning from visiting a cottager whose dwelling was within the covert of the wood, on the border of the alp on which the lodge was situated, I saw from a convenient point of view at the entrance of the wood, that the folding-doors at the entrance into the hall of the mansion were partly open.

"It had been remarked, since the arrival of this lady, that these doors had always been closed: hence I conjectured that the principal servant was probably absent, and that this might be a convenient opportunity for seeing the unhappy lady. I accordingly made what haste I could to the lodge, and, finding no impediment, went in without hesitation. I had never been within this building before, and now entered it with the feelings of one who sets his feet on forbidden ground.

"By an elegant vestibule or porch of a circular form, I passed into a large hall which occupied the centre of the building, being surrounded by pillars of polished marble, and paved with broad flags of the same materials: between each pillar were statues of plaster of Paris from the antique, standing on pedestals, and as large as life, some in groups and others single, all of which were modelled with greater attention to the accuracy of imitation than to true taste or decorum. Besides these, was a cornice around the roof in high relief, representing figures from the ancient mythology; the light being admitted to this apartment by a circular window in the roof,

"I had advanced into the centre of this pantheon before I had leisure to observe the various inanimate figures which surrounded me; but not knowing whither next to direct my steps, I paused, meditating on that perversion of good taste, that induces the great of the present day thus to honour or acknowledge the abominations of heathen polytheism, the names and attributes of whose deities it is a shame to speak of in refined society. Nevertheless, I was then too old and had seen too much of the world, to wonder much at what I then saw: but withdrawing my eyes in disgust, I listened eagerly for any sound by which I might be directed to the apartment of the unhappy lady. Several long galleries, flagged with marble and terminated by large windows, extended themselves from the hall, but which of these to select I knew not; till at length hearing the movement of a distant door, I turned in that direction, and advancing along the passage I came nearly opposite a room, from which I heard several voices proceed, and the following dialogue met my ears.

"'I ask what more would you have done for you? Can we arrest the progress of disease, or restore the reign of beauty?' A taunting laugh followed this remark, and a mournful voice was heard in reply, but the words were not audible.

"An infant voice was next heard by me, repeating the tender word *maman;* and again the first speaker answered in such harsh and unsympathizing tones, as seemed to penetrate my heart.

"I advanced nearer to the door, and then heard more distinctly. I again distinguished the accents of sorrow, and recognized the following expressions:—'Ah! miserable! miserable! And will none shew pity? And is it here—here in my native valley—here in the presence as it were of my father, my sainted father, that I must perish an outcast from society? O, unhappy! O, miserable wretch that I am! Would to God that I had never been!'——Groans and sobs followed these exclamations.

"A short silence succeeded, during which, my eyes turned to the beautiful prospect seen from the window at the end of the gallery. The day being sultry, it was open, and I could therefore more distinctly observe the woods which skirted the border of the alp, above which the slender spire of the village church raised its modest

head. The tranquil and glassy bosom of the lake was visible in part beyond the woods. On one side of the lake, and a little to the right of the alp, the mountain on which it extended itself, arose in a small conical peak, crowned at the very summit with a cluster of pine trees; and on the other side of the lake appeared a range of hills, towering one above another at a greater and still greater distance, until the last snow-capped summit appeared to be floating in ether, the darker bases of the whole range being wholly concealed from the eye.

"While my sight was fixed on these pleasing prospects, I had for a moment forgotten my situation, while I was comparing between the beauty and order so conspicuous in the works of creation, and the deformity and confusion existing in the moral world through sin; and I know not how far I might have pursued these meditations, had not my attention been again directed to what was passing in the chamber.

"'And will you not take me from hence?' said the complaining voice, 'this dreadful place where every thing reminds me of my father, my poor father!' Here audible sobs interrupted the voice, and gave time for some one to reply.

"'How often,' said this person, 'must I tell you, that it was by the order of your physicians that you were brought here to try your native air, as the last resource, when every thing else had been tried in vain?'

"'And was it probable,' replied the unhappy sufferer, 'that it would benefit my health to see these woods and hills again; these scenes of former innocence and happiness, when I was the delight of my father, and the beloved of his heart—his glory and his pride? And when,' she added, with a deeper sigh, 'when, when I believed I had a Father in heaven, and dared to address him as my Father?'

"This last touching address produced a satirical laugh, on which the unhappy lady mentioned the Marquis de Nemours in a reproachful manner, calling him barbarous, for having forsaken her in her utmost need.

"'And do you suppose,' added the other, in a taunting accent, 'that it would have been agreeable to him to have watched the slow progress of disease; and to have

closed those eyes whose sparkling vivacity he used so highly to extol? Be assured, Madam, that he was not sorry to be spared such a task.'

"I could bear no more; I could listen no longer: but instantly came forward into the room. Nor can I describe what I felt for the unhappy woman, who, by her too evident depravity, had left herself at the mercy of such spirits of cruelty.

"It seems that I had advanced far into the room before I was seen, for I had leisure to look round before any one addressed me.

"The room was large and still magnificent, though exhibiting a tarnished and deserted appearance. The cornices and ceiling were ornamented with gilding, and large coloured landscapes were painted on the walls. Between the windows were immense mirrors; and the canopy of the bed was gilt, the hangings of silk being suspended from a kind of circle or coronet highly gilt. The floor was of polished boards in a zigzag pattern, producing an effect to the eye not unlike that of the waves of the sea when slightly agitated. There were several marble slabs, supported by gilt feet, in different parts of the room; and a superb time-piece stood upon the chimney-piece.

"On a sofa at the foot of the bed, and supported by several pillows, lay the unhappy lady, in whom I instantly recognized the resemblance to the picture which still hung in that apartment of my house which had once been her father's study. Though sunk, pale, and lengthened, it was impossible to mistake those delicate features, or those eyes which once had sparkled with an almost heavenly lustre.

"At the further end of the apartment sat a beautiful child playing with flowers which were scattered around her on the floor, some of which she was endeavouring to fasten in the auburn ringlets which shaded in some degree her dimpled features.

"By the side of the sofa sat two females whose appearances were such as made me the less wonder at the words which I had heard issuing from the mouth of one of them. They were tall and majestic persons, and once, no doubt, could have boasted of beauty; but the day of their attractions was evidently past, and the means which they had

adopted to supply that of which time had deprived them were, as usual, inadequate to the desired end: for there is but one thing which can in any degree supply the place of decayed beauty, and that is the expression of holiness; this does, in some degree, triumph over age itself, and diffuse a charm over the withered countenance, when all the lustre and bloom of youth is passed away. On these persons I bestowed not a second glance, but again fixed my eye on the lady; nor can it be conceived what I felt while conjecturing what might have been the nature of the imprudences (to use a word too mild for the occasion) which had brought her to a situation of such inexpressible distress.

"The female servants before mentioned were the first persons who observed me; and the unhappy comtesse, being directed by their eyes to the spot where I stood, uttered a piercing shriek, and either calling me her father, or else apostrophising that dear parent, fainted on her pillow.

"The two attendants, enraged beyond measure at my intrusion, instantly charged me with endangering the life of the lady, whom they now affected to treat with the utmost tenderness, hastening to procure water and other restoratives. In the mean time, they commanded me to withdraw, notwithstanding which, I kept my station, and declared my determination not to leave the lady till she was in a situation to speak to me.

"While this was passing, the comtesse revived, and opening her eyes with a deep sigh, she fixed her attention on me, and then undoubtedly addressed me as her father. I drew near to her, and spoke kindly to her, informing her of my real character. By this time she had recovered her recollection, and endeavoured to raise herself from her pillow, saying with inimitable grace, 'I see my mistake, Sir; you are not my father, though your dress at first bewildered me. Weak as my head is, and misguided as my imagination is, I for a moment conceived that I beheld my father, my poor father, once again: for O!' she added, clasping her slender fingers, 'had it ever been possible for me to have forgotten the best, the most beloved of fathers, the objects now present must have restored my recollection. But O, my father! my father! you were never forgotten by your miserable daughter;

and if I have had a single consolation since I have been in this place, it has resulted from the assurance that you were never permitted to know, or even to suspect, the unworthiness of your child!' At this time a flood of tears seemed greatly to relieve her; and while she yielded to these natural expressions of sorrow, I explained my situation to her, and as I had no hope at that time of being left alone with her, took that occasion of representing to her my views of her condition, and of entreating her to accept an asylum beneath my roof, where I assured her that she should be attended by a respectable female of the village, who had known her from infancy.

"Her reply to all this was cold and restrained: she expressed herself satisfied with her situation and the attentions paid her, leading me to suppose that she did not dare to speak her mind in the present company.

"As I did not understand, however, what she would have said had she been at liberty to speak, I proceeded to press her removal to my house, and especially pointed out to her the supreme importance of religion in her case, where little time might yet remain.

"She seemed to be deeply affected by my reasoning, and answered, 'Alas! those are blessed indeed, who are enabled to enjoy the consolations of religion in the hours of pain and sickness.'

"I was again about to urge the necessity of seeking these consolations, and had again tendered the shelter of my roof to the unfortunate lady, when I was interrupted by the attendants, on whom the comtesse looked with a degree of terror which it was impossible for her to disguise; and finding that it was useless to press the matter further at the present time, I took my leave, secretly resolving to lose no opportunity of attempting the deliverance of this unfortunate and miserable woman. She looked after me as I left the room with such an expression, as filled my heart with anguish; yet neither dared to request my stay, nor to invite my return.

"I was followed to the outer door of the lodge by the two females whom I had seen in the comtesse's room, and I heard the locks secured behind me, as I descended the steps of the piazza.

"When arrived at my own house, I summoned together

some of those persons who had been most attached to my pious predecessor, and we agreed to watch every opportunity of rescuing the comtesse from her present unhappy situation.

"This opportunity did not, however, offer for some days, for we were informed of the return of the principal servant of the marquis that very evening, and perceived that every avenue of the lodge was closely shut or carefully guarded.

"Towards the end, however, of this same week, a little shepherd-boy, who was employed in the care of a few sheep, and who by my desire had driven them several times across the ground in which the lodge was situated, brought me a little note, written on a leaf which had evidently been torn from a book, and which he said had been thrown to him by a child who was playing in the verandah of the lodge as he passed by. 'It was a beautiful child,' he said, 'and richly dressed;' adding, moreover, that when it was observed by some one within that some communication was passing between him and the child, the latter was instantly called to return within doors.

"I opened the note; it contained only a few words which were to this effect:—'On Sunday evening the servants who wait upon me will probably be all engaged: there is to be a fête of some kind among them. It might prove a favourable opportunity for my deliverance, but I know not how to plan it. I am compelled to trust this paper to my infant child: I have no friend but my child.' The note was signed, 'The miserable Estelle.'

"This was indeed a call, and such a one as could not be resisted. Accordingly, when it was dusk on the Sunday evening, I collected my faithful villagers under the covert of a grove, which was very close upon the back of the lodge, and indeed so near that we heard the sounds of the mirth and revelling from within.

"As the darkness increased, we passed round the back of the building, and came opposite the chamber of the poor lady: the windows were closed, but we could distinguish her lying upon her couch, and saw no one in the room. The windows were not formed as they are in England, but like double doors of glass; they were bolted within. I knocked gently on the glass; on which the lady raised her head and gave me a sign to enter. I had nothing else to

do but to burst a pane, which I did with as little noise as possible, and slipping the bolt, went in followed by my companions. Not a word was spoken. The comtesse pointed to the child, which was sleeping on the couch beside her. It was my business to take her up as quietly as possible, while the peasants lifted the couch on which the mother lay, and the next minute we were at some distance from the lodge, and had plunged into the obscurity of the wood.

"I hardly know how we made our escape: but such was the swiftness of our motion, that in a few minutes we found ourselves at the door of my cottage, where the comtesse, who had fainted, probably from the effect of terror, was presently laid in bed, and consigned to the charge of an old and pious female, who had not unfrequently been occupied in the care of her in her infant days.

"It was some time before the comtesse revived; but her first enquiry, when she opened her eyes, was after her child: and when assured that she was actually sleeping in an inner chamber, her mind reverted to her own situation. She looked wildly round her on every well-known object in the chamber, became bewildered and delirious, called on her father, begged that he might be awakened and brought to her, and told us that she had been in a long, long, shocking dream, in which she had fancied many dreadful things.

"I felt her hand: it was burning with fever, and her pulse was dreadfully rapid. I ordered the light to be so placed, that she should see less of the furniture of the apartment, not an item of which had been changed since my predecessor's time; and, as it is common for the pastors of these remote villages in Switzerland to understand some little of surgery and medicine, I ventured to bleed her myself, and administer some draughts: after which she became more composed, and fell asleep.

"From that period, this unhappy lady remained quietly under my roof. I had, indeed, some contests of no agreeable nature with the servants of the marquis; but, as they had gone beyond their orders in their treatment of the unhappy lady, I found means to quiet them, and had the satisfaction, a short time afterwards, of seeing the lodge deserted and shut up. I, however, never troubled the comtesse with any of these inferior matters; for the un-

happy creature had more than enough to endure, not only from bodily sufferings, but from mental anguish.

"After her removal, and the loss of blood, she remained in a state of comparative ease, and almost of torpor, for a few days, seeming to have no other concern respecting any thing without herself but for her child. I had procured medical assistance for her from Lausanne, and had been put in a way of regulating her in such a manner, that she never again experienced any of the more distressing symptoms of her disease. She had suffered dreadfully from fever for many weeks; but, after the application of proper medicines, she became entirely free from any painful recurrence of these feelings: she also in some degree recovered the use of her limbs, which she had nearly lost. And though no rational hope could be entertained of her recovery, her disease, from the time in which she was brought to my house, was so little afflictive in its nature, that she might have been easy, if not happy, had not the wounds of her mind continued long to rankle and fester, and to resist all the remedies which man could supply. The case of her soul was indeed past human help; and it appeared to me, that, as she became more free from delirium, her grief took deeper root, and the horror of her past life was more firmly seated. The state of her mind at one time was, in one word, that of complete despair, from which it seemed impossible to rouse her; and I was led to suppose, at that period, that she was desirous of finding consolation in infidelity, and a termination of all her sorrows in death and annihilation.

"All this while, I remained ignorant of the particulars of her history, for on these subjects she made no communications whatever for a length of time; and though I would gladly have known what had reduced a woman of her condition to such a situation, I avoided all enquiries by which her feelings might be wounded.

"During the whole of the following winter, although, as I before said, she had lost some of the most distressing symptoms of her illness, and was able to walk about her room, and, as the spring advanced, even to step out into the gallery or wooden verandah, (with which many of the cottages in Switzerland are encompassed,) yet there was such a fixed, such a settled, such an unvarying gloom upon her countenance, that not on any occasion

that I can remember was she seen to indulge in a smile. Sometimes, indeed, the innocent playfulness and tender endearments of her little girl would so far affect her as to diffuse a kind of softness on her features; but the impression remained only for a moment, and was generally succeeded by a still more bitter expression of deep and fixed misery.

"Thus the winter wore away, and the spring advanced, when one evening the comtesse sent to request my presence, alleging that her spirits were particularly depressed. I obeyed the call, and found her seated in the gallery above mentioned.

"But in order to bring before the mind of my reader the scene as it really was, I must describe my house, and the spot in which it stood. It was a thatched dwelling of considerable dimensions, the thatch hanging over some feet beyond the walls. The house consisted of two stories, the whole being encircled by a wooden verandah and gallery, into which the doors and windows of each apartment opened. The gallery above was encompassed by a railing; next the house was a small garden, in which were stores of bees and a rich provision of flowers; and from the windows on the north, the village church, the lake, and hills, presented a most delightful prospect; while on the south was a little glen shaded with trees, in the very depths of which was a cascade, which pouring from the heights, and sparkling and foaming in its fall, was presently concealed in a bed of sedges and rushes at the foot of the waterfall.

"The comtesse, when I appeared, had her eye fixed on this cascade as if in deep meditation, and on my approach she started, and seemed to be endeavouring to recollect herself. I perceived that she had been in tears, a symptom which pleased me, as it was of rare occurrence, and indicated a tenderness of feeling which I love to see in the miserable.

"It was remarkable in this lady, that she seldom omitted any act of politeness; indeed it might be said, that, with her, gracefulness of manner had become as it were a second nature. Accordingly, as soon as she saw me, she bowed, and requested me to be seated, at the same time apologizing for having given me the trouble of coming to her, 'but I was low, Sir,' she said, 'very low,

and depressed. I was thinking of my father. This scene but too often reminds me of my poor father; how did he enjoy the beauties now before me! The first remembrances I have are connected with this glen, and the winding wood-walks which my father cut on each side the valley. Do these walks still remain, Sir? yet why do I ask, I never never more shall visit them, but my daughter perhaps may live to retrace these paths, for you, my good Sir, you will never forsake the little Estelle?'

"I repeated my assurances of this kind, and the comtesse thus proceeded:—

"'When I think of my father, my heart seems to melt like wax, I seem to lose all strength of mind, all power of enduring my afflictions. When I think of him and his various excellencies, I can no longer doubt that there is another state of being. Can it be supposed that such graces as my father possessed, such love of God, such ardent aspirations after the righteousness of a future and sinless world, should have been given him to be annihilated?—Can we believe it, my dear Sir?' and she looked me earnestly in the face.

"'Believe it, Madam!' I replied, surprised to hear her speak in this manner; 'were it perceptible that the birds of the air, or the very sheep we see feeding on yonder alp, had a sense of the existence of God, and an earnest longing after the blessings of a future state, or any faculty which might render them capable of enjoying eternal things, I would not hesitate to say that they were formed for eternity.'

"'Eternity!' she replied, 'that is a dreadful word.'

"'And why so, dear lady?' I answered, 'why dreadful, since an eternity of happiness is offered to us all?'

"'No,' she replied, 'not to all; no, not to me.'

"'There,' I answered, 'there you and I differ. I maintain that the joys of heaven are offered to you, and I bring the word of God in attestation of my opinion. You support the contrary opinion, but where is your voucher?'

"'My voucher is here,' answered she, laying her hand on her breast. 'My heart condemns me; I am not fit for heaven; I am not fit to become a subject of mercy. I know it, Sir; I have long known it.'

"'You have long entertained this opinion,' I said,

'but may it not be a false one? Where are the grounds of your assurance?'

"She blushed, and answered, 'I have destroyed my own hopes, by acting against conviction. Are you acquainted with my situation?' and she looked eagerly upon me, as if doubting whether by confessing the extent of her depravity she might not be about to forfeit my protection.

"'I am,' I replied: 'at least, I conjecture much that has been amiss respecting you; and yet I know not one single passage of Scripture which indicates that such as you are beyond the reach of mercy: on the contrary, do I not read the name of Rahab among the saints of God? and am I not told that it was by faith that this chief of sinners was preserved? and were not Peter and Paul among the apostles? though the one denied his Master in the hour of his utmost need, and the other persecuted his people even unto death.'

"The comtesse looked at me with a penetrating glance, and then, with a deep sigh, replied, 'Peter, when he had denied his Master, went out and wept bitterly, but I cannot weep, though weighed down with a sense of sin.'

"'You cannot weep,' I said, 'because weeping is a tender, a filial act; and you have not yet learned to regard God in any other light than the avenger of sin. We weep not, though we may tremble, in the presence of an angry judge, but we shed tears when we think of a parent whom we have grieved. Endeavour to obtain a more correct view of the Deity as revealed in Scripture, and your sense of sin will cease to weigh you down and harden you, as it now does; your grief will then become holy and salutary, and you will be more troubled with the thoughts of having grieved the Holy One, than by any sense of the dread of punishment.'

"I then proceeded to state to her, in as plain language as I could adopt, the great truths of Christianity. I spoke somewhat largely of the love of the Father, knowing that sinners have in general a kind of indefinite dread of the First Person of the Trinity, whom they have not yet learned to approach through the medium of the Second; and I endeavoured to state to her, in as clear a way as I possibly could, that wonderful plan by which God the Father has provided a means of saving the sinner, without violating the attribute of justice, or impli-

eating that of his perfect holiness. I next proceeded to state the sufficiency for man's salvation in the redemption of Christ, his sufferings and obedience, the infinite merits of which, when put in competition with the sins of finite human nature, render the latter but as dust in the balance. I endeavoured to explain to her how those who were foreknown and chosen by the Father and redeemed by the Son, are called, regenerated, and sanctified, by the Holy Spirit. And having urged these doctrines upon her attention, I exhorted her to make it her more immediate object, to look unto Christ, to consider his qualifications as a Redeemer, to regard his merits and his power to save, and to meditate on certain passages of Scripture which I pointed out to her, wherein he repeats his assurances, that none who come to him shall in any wise be cast out.

"She was very attentive during the whole of this exhortation: and from that hour, for several days, whenever I had an opportunity of conversing with her, I conducted her thoughts to the willingness and ability of Christ to save; explaining the various types in which he revealed himself in the Old Testament, particularly that of the brazen serpent; and I directed her nurse, who was an experienced Christian, to be ever guiding her attention to the same point. The consequence of which was, that, with the divine blessing, she evidently became more composed, and evinced an increasing interest on the subject of religion: and though she wept more frequently and spoke of herself with more decided abhorrence, we heard no more of that dreadful language of despair which on her first arrival with us had filled us with such sensations of grief. As I did not, however, receive that entire assurance as I could have wished of a change of heart having taken place in this poor lady, I was still very uneasy about her, and much exercised in prayer respecting her. But towards the middle of April, she was one night suddenly seized with dreadful spasms, and we thought her dying; indeed she thought so herself, and during the intervals of her agonies she expressed such horror of her past life, such earnest desires after better things, and such deep contrition for her unbelief and hardness of heart, that had she even then died I should have had the most cheering hope respecting her. However, she revived, regained her strength in a considerable degree, and con-

tinued in a very comfortable state of health during the whole of the summer and part of the autumn; but again declining with the year, she died before the return of winter, and was committed to the dust by the side of her father.

"From the period of the attack which she had in the month of April, I had remarked a decided change in her; and, no doubt, at this time she had been made a subject of regenerating grace: for how else could we account for that tenderness and contrition of spirit which was from that season observable in her? She was henceforward continually evincing a sense of her utter helplessness and unworthiness, and expressing her willingness, her anxiety, to be saved in any way or on any terms which her heavenly Father should appoint. She spoke perpetually of the wonders of the Redeemer's love, and was anxious that all should know his value as she did. To this effect she wrote to many of her former associates, and particularly to her husband's mother, under whose care, as I afterwards discovered, she had placed two children.

"She expressed herself at times as enjoying much peace, though she had indeed intervals of very deep depression, in which it seemed that she lost all hold of the promises, and considered that it would be for the divine glory that she should perish for ever; but in these gloomy moments there was no bitterness in her spirit, no repining words proceeded from her mouth: but she would say, 'If I perish, I must confess that it is just;' and she would apply to herself those expressive words of Balaam, when speaking of him that should come, *I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh.* (Numbers xxiv. 17.)

"These visitations of darkness did not, however, continue long, neither were they frequent; they were, however, most awful to those present, and never to be forgotten by them.

"The last hours of the Comtesse de Barfleur were calm, and her expressions full of hope. She bequeathed her child to me, receiving my solemn assurance that I would be a father to the orphan; a promise which I have been enabled to fulfil to the present day. A few jewels of no great value, and a manuscript containing her own unhappy life, were all the worldly goods which the comtesse

left her infant. But the blessing of Heaven, which is far above gold and silver, has hitherto attended the orphan; and I have the delight of beholding my adopted one, now in her eighteenth year, precisely such as her mother might have been, had she in the days of blooming youth and unbroken health possessed those humbling and exalting views of religion with which she was blessed during the last few months of her life. My little Estelle was early made to tread in the paths of adversity. Young as she was when her mother died, she was by no means insensible of the loss; and her tender spirit was again repeatedly wounded some years afterwards by the distresses of the country in which she lived: for infidelity and anarchy had spread their horrors even to our sequestered hamlet. Actual hardship and bitter penury have since been sometimes her lot, as she accompanied me in my escape from my house, where my life was no longer safe; and though since our arrival in this island we have found a peaceful shelter and much kindness, yet she seems to find it difficult to cast aside those painful recollections, which to those who are banished from the homes of their fathers must but too often recur.

"But to dwell no longer on these matters, I proceed to lay before my reader the manuscript which was placed in my hands by the dying Comtesse de Barfleur, with a charge that it should not be given to her daughter till she was of an age to profit by the warning which it contains.

THE MEMOIRS OF THE UNHAPPY ESTELLE, THE BEAUTIFUL COMTESSE DE BARFLEUR, AS RELATED BY HERSELF.

"Had I been asked a few months past what I most desired on earth, I should have answered, To receive the assurance that after death my body would never again arise from the dust to which it was doomed to be committed; and that my immortal soul, with all its conscious and reflecting faculties, its ardent longings after happiness, its warm affections and intellectual energies, would cease to be for ever.

"I then saw no other prospect of a termination to my misery but what annihilation could supply; but my religious education, which in former years did not benefit me, was that which rendered it impossible for me to de-

rive comfort and satisfaction from infidelity. The stupor of scepticism has no doubt hung on the souls of many until death: but the child who has received the lesson of wisdom from the mouth of a pious parent, must retain such a knowledge of the divine Being, and such a dread of the divine anger, as must embitter every hour even of the most prosperous life spent in the ways of sin, and render the sophisms of infidelity utterly incapable of lulling the soul into that state of stupor which must end, if not disturbed, in the horrors of eternal death. If the pious parent and instructor fails in making his children holy, at least he must succeed in rendering them wretched in the ways of wickedness, and seldom fails, with the divine blessing, of averting that last and most dreadful effect of a long continuance of sin, namely, the palsy of the conscience, the entire death of religious feelings, and that stubborn opposition and resistance of the will to all kindly influences from within and without, which we have seen in some miserable individuals, concerning whom there is reason to dread that they approach awfully near to the guilt of such as sin against the Holy Ghost, for whom there is no hope either in this world or that which is to come.

"The time indeed was, when I strove against conviction with an obstinacy and pertinacity on which I now look with unfeigned horror. O, what misery did I then endure! what was the fever which then burned in my body, to the raging fever of my soul, the paroxysms of fear and remorse, and the cold shudderings of despair, which alternately possessed me! but still, still my conscience was not dead, and if I for a short interval succeeded in stilling the throbbings of my heart, the image of my father would rise before me, and awaken all the tenderness of my nature. And I hoped, at least, that my fall and consequent wretchedness, and my eternal misery, (for I looked forward only to endless despair,) might never be known to him; for I could not divest myself of the idea, that his happiness through futurity would somehow or other be embittered by the knowledge of his child's perdition, although reason and revelation forbid the apprehension. Thus did this feeling of pure and unmingled affection and reverence, preserve me amidst this tempest of dreadful passions; and more than

once, when I would have terminated my existence on earth by taking large draughts of soporific drops, which had been provided for easing my pains, the remembrance of my father has arrested my hand, and the fear of rendering him unhappy by fixing my doom for ever, has cut short my purpose. Thus, though dead, my father yet seemed to speak to me; and when most oppressed, I often seemed to be most mindful of him. But to shorten these reflections, I proceed with my story.

"I was born in this beautiful valley, being the only child of my parents. My memory does not serve me to bring back the remembrance of my mother, or probably she died before that period in which the young imagination is enabled to retain the impressions made thereon; for as visions reflected in water, so are the impressions made on the breast of infancy; they may indeed be bright and lovely, but they speedily pass away and leave no trace behind them. I have, however, heard, that my mother was not only attractive in her outward appearance, but all glorious within, having many evidences of being a daughter of the heavenly King. And perhaps I might date the commencement of my misfortunes from the event which deprived me of her watchful care; for I had no one in my father's house who could in any degree fill her place to me, excepting an old female servant, named Jeanot d'Esten, whose acquaintance with human nature was so limited, that where she felt affection, as she did for me, she never could suppose that any thing was amiss which did not actually present itself to her senses. My father indeed possessed far more penetration into character than did the good woman just mentioned; and there was no attention in his power and consistent with his various duties as a parish priest, which he did not pay to me. Nevertheless, I continually felt the want of a mother, and that of a proper companion of my own age. I was too frequently left alone, and not sufficiently induced to open my heart in such a way to my elders, as might enable them to read my character and correct my errors.

"I am desirous in the course of my history to declare in what the defects of my education consisted. Not that I would wish to plead any excuse for my own conduct: no, I have been led to look on my past life with unmixed

abhorrence, and to ascribe my miser principally to my own depravity. I verily believe that there could not have been devised any mode of education which would have rendered me an amiable character, (setting the influence of grace aside.) Nevertheless, I have reason to think that my corruptions were increased by one or two circumstances attendant on my early life, and I am the more anxious to point these out, because I believe the evil proceeded from a source which is rarely suspected by well-meaning parents.

"Man, it is well known, is not formed for solitude: the Lord himself said of him even before the fall, *It is not good for the man that he should be alone;* and since that period, universal experience has proved the same. Every individual seeks a helpmate and companion; and from early infancy, children desire the company of those of their own age; while man retains this love of society to the most advanced years.

"Some temptations indeed there are, yes, very many, into which an individual may be brought through the medium of society; but I have reason to think, that it is in seclusion that the mind is most readily prepared for its acquiescence in these temptations, and that where one accustomed to publicity has fallen into sin from surprises and sudden temptations, thousands have been prepared by the excessive privacy of their lives for any occasion of evil which may first present itself. Hence the danger of allowing the unsanctified imagination of unconverted man leisure and opportunity for exercising its pernicious faculties; and hence the imprudence of permitting many hours of solitary indolence to young people of any description, especially to those of lively fancies and active dispositions. Solitude may be less dangerous to the decidedly dull, but to others it may prove a source of mischief.

"I remember little of my very early days, though I have some impressive recollections of certain walks with my father, among the lovely scenery of my native valley; some little circumstances of which are written in indelible characters on my heart: they are associated with the colour and texture of certain flowers, the rush of waterfalls, the whispering of the winds, the hum of bees, and the bleating of sheep. But it was not every day that I was

favoured with my father's company during my hours of exercise: I spent many hours and days alone; and these times, as I advanced in years, became the most dangerous period of my life: for when our nature is unrenewed, a very little occasion will serve to engage the heart in the knowledge of sin; and when this knowledge is once admitted, the desire of indulging that which is evil becomes a decided bent of the mind. There is no situation in life, however guarded, however withdrawn from the common occurrences of life, however refined, however apparently pure, in which abundant aliment may not be found for feeding an unholy curiosity or a depraved fancy. Such being the case, a judicious parent will not desire solitude for his offspring, but will seek occasions of active, innocent, and cheerful sports for his children, in the society of artless young persons of their own age, as the most natural and suitable, and as exercises which are no less necessary for the health of the mind than for that of the body.

"When a child, I was undoubtedly sprightly: I could climb the hills which encompass this valley with the activity of the chamois, and could look down from the most giddy height without trepidation. But in most of my excursions I was alone; there was no brother or sister or young companion to attend my steps, or amuse me with the thousand trifles by which infancy is diverted; and when I returned home, I generally found Jeanot d'Esten at her knitting, or employed in her domestic concerns, and my beloved father perhaps poring over his books. To neither of these could I disburden my mind of all or any of its vanities, or disclose any of those little feelings by which the careful and penetrating instructor is led to discover the secret workings of the heart of his pupil.

"I am not finding fault with the nature of my education as being improper for every one; but it was, indeed, particularly unsuited to me, as I was a child of exceeding lively faculties, amazingly high spirits, restless curiosity, and ardent feelings. A child of a more composed and quiet temperament might have been benefited, and found improvement only of the best kind, where I was injured.

"In the mean time, my beloved father used all the means which his own paternal and pious feelings suggested for inspiring me with the best sentiments with re-

spect to religion, the highest and most exalted truths of which he daily set before me in the most plain and simple manner, that if I have failed to do well, it has not been through want of knowledge, and if I have departed from the glory of my sex, it has not arisen from ignorance.

"But, most assuredly, religion never touched my heart, and scarcely my feelings. O beloved parent! thy form is now before my eyes, such as thou wast when, in the retirement of thy study, thou didst impart the lessons of piety to thy child, or led her mind to the contemplation of a blessed futurity, on which thine own heart ever delighted to dwell. O my father! blessed was the hour in which thine eyes were closed on this present state of being, to open upon the happiness of the future!

"If my father erred in his treatment of me, it was only through an overweening affection. I am persuaded, in theory this excellent man understood human nature well, and was so far prepared to encounter the evils in the heart of man; yet, where his affections were strongly excited, and where he had received kindness, or even common civility, he too often failed to apply his convictions of man's depravity to their proper purpose. His improper charity led him, in many instances which I can now recollect, to unsuitable forbearance; and if such indulgence were not unfrequently extended to his child, it can afford no matter of surprise. How often, how very often does the dimpled loveliness of infancy, and the sparkling beauty of more advanced youth, act like a spell to subvert the mind of even the most enlightened parent!

"That my father was thus blinded, when contemplating his only child, I am certain, from what I can recollect of many of his discourses, wherein he addressed me, not as a sinner still under the influence of sin, and needing an entire change of heart and nature, but as one on whom that saving change had already taken place; and thus he unintentionally augmented the pride of my heart. It is with the greatest veneration for my father's excellencies, that I advert to this error, occasioned by the partiality of his feelings towards me, and as a caution to parents in general; for perhaps it is almost as difficult to divest an individual of partiality when meditating on the faults of his children, as when contemplating his own defects.

"But while I indulge in these reflections, time runs on: the thread of life is drawing to an end, and my task remains incomplete. I would observe, that my education was attended to, in many respects, independent of religious instruction, with considerable care, my father being not only learned, but accomplished, having a fine ear for music, and much skill in drawing. Under these circumstances I passed my early life. My character, as I advanced in years, certainly strengthened, but not in that which is right. I was sensible that I had my father's good opinion, and that of all who knew me; and I had sense enough to know that I must not risk the loss of my good name. Nevertheless, my perverse inclinations, as time advanced, became stronger, and my desire for worldly pleasures became established. My disposition was naturally daring, and, notwithstanding my sex, I had but little fear of any kind. I was violent and vindictive in my temper. As to any idea of regulating my thoughts, I had none; it was a duty of which I had formed no notion; neither do I suppose that any person, who has not been brought under the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, can feel any obligation to attend to it. Celestial influence must beam on the heart, ere its benighted state will be discovered, or before any individual can be aware of the abominations which lurk within.

"Through the peculiar favour of my heavenly Father, and his blessing on the conversations I have heard since I entered this house, I have been made to feel that the control of the thoughts is one of the most important branches of the duty of a Christian, and a control not to be exercised by the unassisted powers of man. I do not wonder at any judgment, however severe, which these sins may bring upon the individual who indulges them; especially when they are cherished by persons residing in religious families, and who assume the form of religion, and use its language, although utterly destitute of its power.

"In the mean time I attained my fifteenth year, still improving in the eye of my too partial father, who, not comprehending those evidences which I gave of what was wrong, which would probably have been apparent enough to one better skilled in the ways of youth, still believed that he possessed in his Estelle all that the tenderest parent could desire; and this continued partiality and

consequent indulgence still administered more and more to my destruction.

"Although my mind had, as I before remarked, been long in a very bad state, yet, as I had been hitherto removed from the contagion of bad company, and preserved from strong temptation, my depravity was as yet known to no one, and surely not comprehended by myself; and though I was prepared for the commission of evil, I was so blind as to account myself a virtuous daughter, when a slight circumstance gave so strong a direction to all my feelings, that my progress towards ruin from that time became more rapid.

"I was about sixteen years of age, when an old acquaintance of my father, who resided in Paris, and who had lately become a votary of the new system of philosophy, sent him a present of some of the latest publications. Many of these works were philosophical researches, but others were sentimental and romantic stories, written with a view to render the new principles seductive to the young and inexperienced.

"My father was in his study when the box was brought to him. He opened it in my presence, and, having looked into each volume, he threw them down, one after another, in high and honourable disdain, descanting freely upon the baneful tendency of the new principles of philosophy; soon after which, being engaged in some better study, he called upon me to pack up the books again in the box, declaring his resolution to send them back to Paris. I remember well the words he used when he appointed me to this task. 'I have examined these books, my Estelle,' he said, 'and so much disapprove of them, that I feel it my duty to return them to the person who sent them. If he were not aware of their tendency, it was his duty to have become so, before he made himself the instrument of their dissemination; and if he knew their tendency, he has justly incurred my resentment. You shall restore them, my daughter,' he added, 'to the box in which they came, and I will put my seal upon the box; for no part of my family shall be polluted by reading these hateful publications, while they remain under my roof.'

"If my father had been better acquainted with me, he would not have allotted this task to me. I was not the honourable and faithful child he believed me to be:

no; I had lived in the habit of deceiving him, and my knowledge of the world makes me fear that there are many daughters such as I was.

"The dealings of a parent with his child are generally sincere. That parent must be base indeed, that does not wish his child to be good and happy; but the deceitful son and artful daughter are, I fear, no uncommon characters.

"Before I began to collect and pack up the books, my father's back was turned to me, and I perceived, by the motion of his hand, and the interrupted murmurings of his voice, that he had forgotten his acquaintance in Paris, and his treacherous present, and was utterly lost and absorbed in his studies.

"I placed the books in such order upon the floor, that I could read the lettering upon the backs. In the titles of the larger part of them, there was nothing attractive to me; they appeared to be upon dry, philosophical, uninteresting subjects. But a novel in four volumes, professing to guard the young against the dangers of the wanderings of the heart, was a bait just fitted for one in my peculiar state; and I was tempted to remove these books into a concealed place, before I restored the rest to the box, which being done, my father placed his seal on the package, and I withdrew the purloined volumes to my own apartment.

"I had sufficient leisure for the perusal of these books; and many were the mischievous lessons which they conveyed to my mind. By these books, my attention was first directed to consider, unhappily, whether I might not lay claim to personal beauty; and I well recollect rising from the table at which I sat, while reading the volume, and going to a large old mirror in the room, to view myself, and to enquire whether I might not hope for that admiration which seemed to form the happiness of the heroines of that romance I was pleased with.

"The vanity natural to our sex, led me to contemplate my figure with extraordinary satisfaction, and a new regret came into my mind at the solitariness of my situation.

"I shall not speak of the other evil lessons inculcated by this novel. Suffice it to say, that the insidious author found in mine a heart prepared by vanity and pride for the reception of his poison, while the solitariness of

my situation gave occasion to the venom to diffuse itself through all my powers.

"But now I have reached an important and awful period of my life, which I record with many bitter reflections. I had just entered my eighteenth year, when it was reported that the gentleman of Geneva, who owned the lodge on the side of the mountain, had died, and that his son had sold it to the Marquis de Nemours, a young nobleman of France.

"This lodge had been uninhabited for many years, during which time it had been shut up. As it lay not very distant from my father's garden, a small wood and narrow dingle only intervening between them, the distance was not so great as to intimidate an enterprising child such as I was; and the very obstacle of barred windows and bolted doors, had acted as so many attractions to draw me to this place. Once, especially, I recollect stopping at this building, when I had been walking with my father; it was evening, and the lights and shades upon the mountain were so remarkably beautiful, that my father observed he never should be weary in beholding them. I remember at this time, that he ascended the steps of the portico, and sat down with me by his side on the highest of them. It was precisely the hour when the shepherds pen their flocks; and we saw a shepherd on the side of the opposite mountain, collecting his sheep, and driving them before him. My father directed my attention to this scene, from which, though a very common one, he took occasion to elucidate those parts of Scripture which describe the Saviour in the character of a shepherd. But whither wanders my imagination? O, my father! my father! and could I live with you, could I daily hearken to such discourse as this, and remain unchanged, unconverted, hard as a stone, devoted to wickedness—and did your very tenderness and partiality even tend to my destruction? O, proud heart! O, sinful heart! O, heart which no kindness could move! Great, great must be thy condemnation!

"When the news was brought that the Marquis de Nemours had entered into possession of the lodge, and that preparations were actually being made for his reception, I was with Madame d'Esten; and I expressed in her presence the pleasure I received from this information.

"She looked seriously at me, and said, that she wondered to hear me express such feelings, adding, that she had rather the lodge should fall into utter ruin, than be so occupied.

"'And wherefore?' said I.

"'Because,' she answered, 'the Marquis de Nemours is, I hear, a bad man; and there is a fear that his example may be the means of introducing those vices into our little valley, the very names of which are, agreeably with the direction of the apostle, scarcely known among us.'

"Madame d'Esten spoke but the feelings of every serious person in the village; but those, who, like me, were lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, formed different opinions on the subject.

"Shortly after this conversation, several servants of the marquis arrived with many workmen, who were employed in repairing and beautifying the lodge; which work was scarcely concluded, when the marquis himself arrived, accompanied by a large train of young persons of both sexes: but whether the females were inferior persons or ladies of family, we knew too little of the manners of the world to make out. But however this might be, we were given to understand that the party proposed spending the whole of the summer months in this situation, amusing themselves with excursions on the mountains, music, theatrical amusements, and such other diversions as thoughtless persons take delight in.

"Had I been in a proper state of mind, seeking my happiness from a right source, I should not have been delighted by the arrival of this family in the neighbourhood; but my affections had never been drawn by those objects which religion affords, and were now anxiously seeking others, which, though infinitely inferior, I trusted would be competent to insure me true happiness.

"From the time that I was informed of the actual arrival of the marquis and his gay retinue, I became extremely anxious to see them, and very imprudently walked continually in those woods which lay between my father's house and the lodge; but as I did not yet venture out upon the lawn beyond these woods, I did not meet with any of the family. Being thus frustrated in my hopes for several days, I trusted that at least I should see some of the marquis's people at church on the

approaching Sunday, but there again I was disappointed; for what indeed could any individual belonging to the train of the Marquis de Nemours have to do in a place of worship?

"I walked from church this day, after my disappointment, in no very pleasant state of mind, in company with my father and Madame d'Esten, followed by two hoary-headed shepherds, who had also been at church, and were returning to their cottages upon the mountains. With these men my father, as was his frequent custom, entered into discourse; and I have a very accurate recollection of the conversation. They represented themselves as having lived all their lives among the mountains, and the elder of them spoke much to this purpose: —'I am now,' he said, 'fourscore years of age; and my ancestors, as I have been led to believe, have, from time immemorial, fed their flocks on these hills, enjoying that content and peace of mind which the blessing of God only can bestow. It is true,' he added, 'that our family have been sometimes persecuted for their religion: my father, when a boy, was driven from his native cottage, and compelled to wander several years through foreign countries, where he endured incredible hardships. But what,' added he, 'was the fury of the persecuting papists, what were the evils which they inflicted, when compared with the dangers which now threaten us and our children?'

"'How so?' said my father.

"'Ah, Monsieur Claude!' answered the old man, 'that gay young marquis will, I fear, introduce that which will prove more fatal to us than the fire and sword of the persecutor. O,' added he, 'how does it grieve me to see our ancient woods and valleys, which, for ages past, have been the retreat of those who fled into solitude that they might serve their God in spirit and truth, to see them rendered the harbours of profligacy and irreligion, and to hear the song of the drunkard in those places where, in old times, our fathers met to praise their Redeemer!'

"The old man then proceeded to describe the mode of living in the lodge, with which he had become acquainted from some accidental circumstance which I now forget.

"My father's honest indignation was so strongly ex-

cited by this discourse, that, clasping his hands together, he fervently prayed for the removal of these persons from the neighbourhood; and turning to Madame d'Esten, he said, 'These are practices which we have heard of only; and we believed ourselves in a situation too remote from the world to suppose it possible we should feel their pernicious influence.'

"I shall not describe my feelings on occasion of this conversation; but it may be supposed that they were not in unison with those of the speakers. I returned home in a dejected state, and, during the whole of the next week, remained in a very unsettled and uneasy frame of mind, wholly dissatisfied with all around me, and regretting my entire exclusion from those pleasures and amusements which I thought befitting my age, at the same time diligently gleaning up every account of what was passing in the house of the marquis.

"The Sabbath-day returned; and in the afternoon I accompanied my father and Madame d'Esten to the village church, it being the season when my father was accustomed to catechise and exhort all the young people in the village.

"It was a lovely evening in summer; and I have reason to remember it, for it was the last time that I ever visited that spot in the company of my father. The scene is present with me now, and I think I can still see the shadows which flitted on the opposite side of the valley, with the pleasing and sublime effect of the snowy mountains, shining with a rose-coloured light, and conveying the impression of awful grandeur. The church was filled with young people and some few old men and women; the girls in their neat muslin caps, and the old women in their large flat straw hats. My father looked benevolently on his people, as he passed between them to the reading-desk, and began the service with an exhortation. The subject was from the Lord's Prayer:—'Lead us not into temptation;' and he arranged his discourse under various heads: first pointing out that it must be understood that God is on no occasion the tempter of his intelligent creation; for God cannot be tempted, neither tempteth he any man; and that we must therefore understand the divine intention in dictating this prayer to be, that we might learn to submit ourselves

wholly to the will of God, and neither seek after, nor even desire, any change or modification of our situations in life, however desirable in other respects, by which we might be more exposed to the temptations of sin.—'For it is certain,' he added, 'that the Almighty, in his divine wisdom, and as a proof of his just displeasure, sometimes may withdraw his help even from those for whom he has purposes of final mercy; and in so doing, leave them to the power of those sinful inclinations from which they would have been delivered, had they in humility and conscious dependence continued to present the prayer of our Lord.'

"Under the second particular, my father led his audience to examine their hearts, and to enquire into the state of their desires and feelings; and as he looked round, I thought that his eye rested on me. I might be mistaken; but a sudden shock agitated my heart, and had he looked longer upon me, he, no doubt, would have observed my confusion, for I felt the blood rise up to my very brow.

"My father next proceeded to trace the progress of sin; to mark its rise in the heart, its gradual growth in solitude, and during the hours of midnight, of silence, and secrecy, and its advancement to strength and firmness, fitting the mind to meet the first opportunity of seduction which the arch tempter may have prepared: for lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. In this part of his discourse, the faithful pastor endeavoured to correct the commonly-received opinion concerning the operation of temptation, which is supposed generally to be by surprise. 'My experience and knowledge of life, little as it has been,' said he, 'has convinced me that sin seldom subdues by surprisals, and through the power of a sudden temptation. The holy and prepared mind, the heart which is strong in the Lord, will not suddenly fall under sin. Where temptation overcomes by violence, or seems so to do, it is certain that the soul is already prepared to be thus subdued. Let him that has fallen look to his heart, and ask these questions—What was the state of my heart before this fall? was I walking humbly with my God? was I desirous of inward purity? in whom did I place my confidence? where were my affections?'

"I remember little more of this discourse. What I had already heard made me sufficiently uneasy; and I was lost in a train of bitter reflections till the discourse was concluded and the catechising commenced. We were all in our places as we had sat during the discourse, rising only to answer as addressed by my father, when suddenly a step was heard in the porch, and, the moment afterwards, a young gentleman entered the church, and advanced to the further end of it, where, standing up on one side of the reading-desk, he turned round and gazed on the congregation.

"It was not necessary to tell us that this stranger was one of the inmates of the lodge: his air and manner marked too well his high breeding, and the peculiar elegance of his person, and expression of his countenance, led me to suppose that he could be no other than the Duke de Nemours. His hair was light and without powder, his features finely formed, his eyes brilliant; and though he did not smile, there was a something in the position of his lips which led us to believe that he was scarcely restrained from so doing by the sacredness of the place and his sense of good-manners. My father was aware of his presence; but made no other variation in his general manner, than by putting all the questions to the young men rather than to the young women then present.

"When the catechising was finished, my father descended from his desk, and was accosted very politely by the stranger, who expressed his satisfaction at what he had heard, and, being politely answered, accompanied us from the church.

"My mother's grave is on the southern side of the church. We had planted sweet thorns and roses round it. In order to avoid the crowd, as I went out of the porch, I had stepped a little aside from the common path, and was treading near this sacred repository of my parent's ashes. Suddenly I felt my steps arrested, and found that my clothes were caught by the thorns. I stopped to disentangle myself, and in so doing a thorn pierced my hand. The pain caused a further delay; and as I pressed my fingers on the wound, being still detained by the thorns, the young stranger observed my situation, and, coming to my help, he set me free, but not

until my gown was torn, and the fairest branch of the sweet thorn broken from the stem.

"This was the first occasion of my speaking to the Comte de Barfleur, (for it was no other than my future husband whom I then beheld,) and I have often reflected with a kind of superstitious dread on the occasion of our first addressing each other.

"The Comte de Barfleur accompanied my father to his house; but during the walk said little to me. As he lingered a little at the door of the house, my father invited him in, at the same time giving me a look by which I understood that I was to make my retreat. I accordingly went to my room.

"I have said something of the general state of my feelings, and could add much more; but I now refrain: indeed they were then of so mixed and complicated a nature, that they would be most difficult to define. They were such, however, as made me shed tears; for there was a struggle in my mind—a struggle between right and wrong; there being, on one side, a natural desire of doing well and acting virtuously, and on the other, an ardent longing after the pomps and pleasures of this world. I use the word *natural* in this place, because I am well convinced that there was no inferiority of grace in the feelings I indulged; for they had a reference only to the good opinion of men, the desire of honour, and the dread of censure. The very heathens are a law unto themselves, their consciences approving or disapproving their actions: but grace exercises a reforming and cleansing power over the heart, and aids us to act as in the sight of God, and with a view to his approval or censure. But whatever might have been the nature of my feelings, I was certainly very unhappy, and sat weeping awhile in my chamber; till at length, being restless, I came into the gallery which was before my window, on the side of the house that commands a prospect of the dingle, and the high grounds, and woods, and downs, where the lodge was situated. There, to my surprise, I saw the young stranger, who, having taken leave of my father, was slowly passing through the garden towards the dingle. His hand was upon the wicket, which opened from the garden to the dingle, at the moment I entered the balcony; and as he turned to give a parting look at the

cottage, he beheld me. Swift as an arrow he instantly returned, and addressed me as I stood above him. It is of little consequence what he might say; most certainly his words were couched in those terms of gallantry which are often so pleasing to our sex, though used as a mere matter of ceremony.

"I had, however, been always addressed with the utmost simplicity, and was therefore more affected by this high tone of courtesy than another would have been who had been more accustomed to it. I have no doubt but my manner was more than sufficiently encouraging to his presumption, for every man is presumptuous who addresses a woman, whom he ought to suppose to be virtuous, in a clandestine way, for, as he took his leave, he expressed his hope of soon seeing me again; then leaving me, I saw him passing up the wood-walks in his way to the place of his temporary abode.

"When I met my father in the afternoon, I ventured to ask him how he liked his visiter. He answered, that had he not previously heard of him as connected with bad company he should have thought better of him; 'as it is,' he said, 'I can only hope the best; but it is a pity, that the son of an old Huguenot family in the ancient kingdom of Navarre, (for such I find he is,) should be found in such society.' Here the matter dropped as far as my father was concerned, but not so with me.

"There was an old shepherd, who resided in a cottage bordering on the alp where the lodge was situated, who, being confined by the rheumatism to his cabin, had been for some weeks the patient of good Madame d'Esten, who visited him most days, carrying him such sustenance and medicines as he most needed.

"On the day following the Sabbath, the good old lady was preparing to pay her daily visit, when, observing her intention, I offered to take her place; and not being suspected of any other view than that which I confessed, my offer was accepted, and, after our early dinner, I set off with my little basket on my arm, and wearing my usual large straw hat. The evening was warm, and my father being engaged in his study, and knowing that I should not be missed, I lingered on my way, scarcely acknowledging my purpose to my own mind. I had with me a little dog as my only companion; and probably a

stranger with no more than ordinary penetration would have seen nothing in my person, my manner, and my figure, but simplicity and innocence.

"Thus accoutred, and thus accompanied, I passed through the garden and descended into the glen, winding my way among the wood-walks, till having reached the bottom of the dingle, I began to ascend; all without me was paradise, and all within was wild confusion. I still proceeded through the shady coverts, till I had ascended higher than the wood, and passed beyond the belt of pines which encompassed the alp on which the lodge was situated. I then pursued a narrow stony path, which led still further upwards towards the shepherd's cabin, and attained an eminence formed by a shelf of the rocky hills, from which I could look down over the pines upon the lodge, and see the whole valley extended at my feet. From this lofty site, I could discern the snowy mountains, which appeared more boldly, more eminently magnificent; the bases being discernible, and their peaks appearing still more lofty than they were accustomed to do from the lower regions. Again I continued my steps, and winding round the base of a conical rock, I at length reached the shepherd's hut; and finding the old man seated at his door, I presented him with what I had brought, and was withdrawing, when, looking kindly at me, 'Fair shepherdess,' he said, 'beware of the wolves which beset these solitudes; methinks I should have been better pleased to have seen old madame on this occasion, than such an one as you.'

"I did not pretend to misunderstand the old man, nor was I offended: but I answered, 'Fear not, my good friend, I will take care of myself.'

"'Take care of yourself!' he repeated: 'poor innocent! you are but in a dangerous way, believe me, lady, if you have none other to take care of you.'

"I turned away as he spoke these words, and gave him a smile. I had known this old man from infancy, and little did I then think, that this parting smile would be the last courtesy I should ever shew him.

"The sun was descending as I came down the hill, and its golden rays were sinking beneath the horizon as I again entered within the shades of the belt of pine. Through these I slowly passed, and was aware of the sud-

den change in the light, as the disk of the sun became entirely concealed behind the mountains, leaving only a brilliant gilding on the tops of the woods. At that moment the breeze blew fresher. I was precisely in that part of the grove nearest to the lodge; and I stood still for a moment, looking towards it, and trying if I could discern any individuals in the portico or verandah.

"The murmur of rural sounds which arose from the valley was dying away as the evening advanced, the song of birds had ceased, and the lowing of the cows belonging to the cottagers had almost died away; all became still but the beatings of my wayward heart: for I knew that I was doing wrong by lingering in this place, and yet I could not resolve to leave it. The night advanced, the shades became deeper; and suddenly I saw the whole lodge illuminated, while strains of sweet music, as if proceeding from horns and clarinets, reached my ear.

"If I had been fixed to the spot before this by the power of my wayward fancies, I felt now more and more riveted to the place. I stood listening in eager attention, I know not how long, neither can I say how long I might have stayed, when suddenly I was startled by the barking of my dog. A moment afterwards I heard approaching steps, and, not waiting to ascertain the direction of these sounds, I quitted the tree against which I had been leaning, and fled towards home, and, as it happened, in the precise direction from which the person was approaching, although the winding course of the wood-walks had in some degree misled my ear.

"In consequence of this, I was presently brought close to the person from whom I meant to escape; and, dark as was the wood, I immediately perceived that this was no other than the young stranger whom I had seen the day before.

"I was not so lost to a sense of right and wrong, as not to be ashamed at being thus surprised in the neighbourhood of the lodge; but the comte soon contrived to restore my self-complacency, and even to bring me to acknowledge that there would be a chance of meeting me another time in this same place. Thus I yielded to temptation, and proceeded, step by step, from one offence to another.

"The comte accompanied me to the gate of my father's

garden; but there he took his leave, without attempting to come in. And here was a sufficient proof, had I needed additional proof, that he, as well as I myself, was sensible he was doing wrong; and I ought to have understood his refusal to enter into the house as a hint that he was fully aware of my imprudence in being with him, even thus accidentally as it seemed, had I chosen to reflect. But reflection suited me not at that time. I entered trembling into the garden, and looked anxiously towards a favourite walk of my father's, fearing to see that dear parent pacing it up and down in a meditative mood, as he often was accustomed to do at this hour of the evening, while waiting for his supper.

"But ah! I needed not to fear. Alas! alas! this sight I thus so wickedly dreaded to see was never more to be seen by me. Never, never from that hour, did your footsteps, my beloved father, trace your accustomed path in your beloved garden, or visit the wood-walks wild in which you so much delighted. I, your daughter, dreaded to see you in your usual place; I hoped you would be out of my way;—and my wicked desires were granted. You had already lived long enough for your child; your guardian care was become a burden to her; I wished to be relieved from it; and my wish was granted.

"Oh, sin! sin! how dreadful are the effects of sin!—parricide is one of the awful evils in its dreadful train. Yet I did not murder him: no, that horror was spared me, kindly spared me. I did not break his heart. He knew not of my offences; he believed me all he wished. It was the stroke of love which terminated his existence—in mercy terminated it, before he was aware of the dishonour of his child.

"But to proceed with my narrative while reason and strength are left me.—As I said before, I saw not my dear father where I expected to see him, but I had no apprehensions. I went to the house, and entered the little vestibule, and into the study; and still not seeing any one, I went up stairs, hearing voices and seeing lights above. And Oh! conceive what was my horror and amazement to find my father stretched on a bed, pale and deathlike, without sensibility or motion, Madame d'Esten and others being gathered round him, while an old leech or village doctor was in vain endeavouring to

draw blood from veins which had been deeply opened in both arms and in his temple.

"It was with difficulty that I could refrain from uttering a shriek as I entered the room, and more than a minute before I could comprehend what all this meant, or could be made to understand that my poor parent, having been praying with a dying man in the village, had returned to his house in his usual health to all appearance, but had not sat an hour in his study, before he was heard to call for Madame d'Esten, and ere she could come to him he had fallen, apparently without life, from his arm-chair upon the floor.

"'And has he not spoken since?'

"'Yes,' said Madame d'Esten; 'about a quarter of an hour since he revived a little, opened his eyes, and called for his daughter.'

"'He asked for me!' I exclaimed, 'and I was——' Here I stopped: I could utter no more; but, throwing myself on my knees, close to the pillow of the lifeless saint, I prayed, I supplicated, I besought, I frantically besought, only one word—one dying word—one blessing—one single blessing. And O what resolutions did I then make! how did I deprecate my miserable meeting with the comte, and the frivolous, the guilty conversation in which I had indulged him! 'Had I returned but one quarter of an hour sooner, my father! my beloved father!' I said, 'I might have had your blessing!'

"As I proceeded to address the cold, the silent, the speechless frame of my father, on which Death had now too plainly set his terrible signet, I became more and more frantic; and when the persons present would have closed the eyes and settled the limbs, I sprang from my knees, clasped my arms round the body, and was relieved by a fit of total insensibility, from which I did not recover till the surgeon, who had been sent for in vain for my poor father, afforded me some relief by taking a quantity of blood from my arm.

"And now, my child,—for it is for thee I retrace these sorrowful memorials,—I must be spared any very particular detail of the events which immediately followed. My beloved father was committed to the dust by the side of my mother; and some months afterwards, the Comte de Barfleur, having renewed his acquaintance with me,

and discovered that I had a sense of honour (to use the word in the commonly accepted meaning) not inferior to his own, used such means to induce me to become his wife, that I consented, and was led by him to the altar in the village church, much to the discomfort of many of my father's friends, and directly in contradiction to the opinion of Madame d'Esten, who never liked the comte, and assured me that I could have no prospect of happiness with a friend of the Marquis de Nemours.

"Immediately on my marriage, Madame d'Esten left the valley, and I was taken by my husband to the lodge, where the duke and his companions still were, though preparing to depart.

"Since my poor father's death, I had lived in great retirement, and had never been introduced to the Duke de Nemours, or to any of the family at the lodge, the intentions of the comte respecting me not being generally understood by them. I never shall forget the uneasy sensations which I experienced at the moment in which I kissed the cheek of Madame d'Esten, and hung on her maternal breast—at the instant in which I was about to leave her and the house of my fathers, to go among strangers, to make new friends, to acquire new habits, and to experience new trials. But I had chosen my own lot: it was a brilliant one; and if it did not prove a happy one, I have none to blame so much as myself.

"I certainly had some objection to go to the lodge, having conceived a prejudice against its inhabitants: but it seems that the comte wished to shew his bride, as an excuse for doing what the duke had called a very foolish thing; and as he assured me that I should see none but persons of honourable character at the lodge, I consented to his wishes.

"I had been told that there were several ladies in the party; and one of these being a sister of the duke, and the widow of a nobleman in France, and the others, wives of gentleman who were with them at the lodge, I tried to think, though against conviction, that all would be well, and accompanied my husband without further opposition.

"It was in that lodge, in that abode of splendid vice and misery, that I first made my entrance into high life, and first had an opportunity of observing, that happiness

is not always combined with splendour, and that fine manners as often disguise evil passions as they add to the charm of better feelings.

"We were in a district where wheel carriages were of little use. I, therefore, though a proud and noble bride, left my father's house on foot, and not without many tears. Every shrub and tree, and every near and distant prospect, reminded me of some scene of childhood, and of some dear friend from whom I must now be for ever parted on earth. When we had passed the dingle, and come out on the alp in front of the lodge, I was, however, speedily reminded of my new honours, for the Duke de Nemours, and all the noble party, were waiting to receive us in the portico. I was saluted with the sound of horns, clarinets, and other music; and a band of the female servants of the lodge (among whom were the two women who were my chief attendants during my second visit to this dreadful place) were prepared to strew flowers in my path, being themselves dressed in white, and wearing garlands of roses.

"As I approached the portico, the duke and his sister (which last was any thing but the respectable lady I had expected to see) stepped down to receive me; and, while I trembled at the opinion he might form of the country girl who had thus risen to high degree, he suddenly turned to my husband, and said in a low voice, 'Indeed, Theodore, I now indeed can wonder no longer;' adding something about engagements broken, which I did not then understand, but which I afterwards learned referred to some contract of marriage into which the comte had entered before he left France.

"Such was my reception from the duke, who was a man of the first fashion, and who possessed a physiognomy which, for animation and variation of expression, might afford a subject for constant speculation to those who feel an interest in deciphering the human countenance, and find a pleasure in being baffled in the attempt.

"Madame de Portalier, sister of the duke, was evidently older than himself, but still retaining all the vivacity of youth. She dressed elaborately, wore many ornaments, was highly rouged, and had a freedom of manner which would instantly have put me on my guard

in my intercourse with her, had I been under the influence of any thing like prudential motives. There were many other ladies and gentlemen at the lodge; but as they were persons with whom I had no further connexion, I have but little to say of them.

"And now I begin to feel a renewal of distaste for gay and pleasurable life. O, how flat and stale do all those scenes appear in the review, in which I once took so much delight! Believe me, my child, that the most gay and successful course of fashionable and worldly life, possesses no charms, and yields no pleasures, comparable to the peace, and hope, and joy attending the path of the humble and lowly Christian.

"Who can describe the vapidness, the sordid feelings, the languor and vexation, which accompany the life of an unconverted man, and the society of worldly persons?

"But to leave these reflections. I was led into the lodge in the manner I described, and suddenly found myself at the height of my wishes, and precisely in that situation after which the secret desires of my heart had panted. I was now brought into temptation, which I had never been sufficiently careful to avoid.

"As I beheld the glow of admiration with which I was received by every one present, my cheeks flushed with secret triumph; and I ascended the steps of the portico with the feelings of a monarch who first mounts the throne to which he has long aspired. The next moment, however, just as the Duke de Nemours was preparing to lead me into the house, I looked back, and my eye fell upon the little winding path which led to the cabin of the old shepherd. Swift as lightning which flashes from pole to pole, were the recollections which at that instant darted through my mind. My father, the shepherd, Madame d'Esten, a thousand scenes of comparatively innocent childhood at once presented themselves to my view, and the voice of conscience was prophetic and painful. A tear trembled in my eye, but I brushed it hastily away, and stepped with apparent gaiety into the large hall in the centre of the building, where the fascinations of novelty soon removed those painful reminiscences which had flashed across my breast. In common with all unsanctified persons, I had been in the habit of associating the ideas of magnificence with hap-

pineśs, and I regarded at that moment all the splendours which surrounded me as so many promises of future enjoyment. I was led through the great hall by the duke, into the saloon beyond. This was the most sumptuous apartment of the lodge. Its brilliancies are indeed faded, the worm and rust have now despoiled them; but it had then been but lately furnished, and would have rivalled some of the most splendid chambers of Versailles.

"I was seated on a sofa at the upper end of the room. Madame de Portalier placed herself on my right hand, and the duke on my left; and there I received the more particular compliments of all present, until, intoxicated by vanity, I was led to feel that I was then only beginning to live, and that all with whom I had been previously conversant had treated my transcendant merits with a degree of injustice, which I should have accounted for by supposing that their eyes had been blinded by envy, had not my own father and nurse been of the number; but how can envy find a place in the breasts of such dear connexions? A splendid feast, a pantomime in a small theatre which had been prepared in the lodge, and a ball, concluded this memorable day; and I arose the next morning only to enjoy a participation of the same pernicious amusements.

"A fortnight was spent in this manner, a fortnight principally devoted to me by all the splendid company there assembled; and during that period such was the delirium of my feelings, that I can recollect experiencing only one uneasy day. That day was the Sabbath, and the first Sabbath which I had ever spent in the society of unholy persons.

"The service of the church was performed that day by a person who had fulfilled the duties ever since the death of my father, a young pastor, who happened at that time to be visiting his parents in the village, and whom I had known from childhood.

"It had once been thought that the parents of this young man hoped for a connexion with our family; but how this matter passed off, I never enquired, being totally indifferent on the subject. Probably I had made it appear by my manner, which was generally indifferent and haughty to those whom I chose to think my inferiors, that I was by no means disposed to accommodate myself to this arrangement.

"The village bell early in the morning first awakened me to the recollection of the day. I was being dressed, and the window was open. I felt an indescribable sensation, as this sound vibrated on my ear; and when released from the hands of my waiting-maids, (for I had already acquired the habit of being served by others,) I went to a closet within my room, and there stood for a while hearkening to the sound, which I could not but hear distinctly, although it was mingled with the crowing of the cock, the lowing of the cattle, the barking of dogs, and the noise of the wind amidst the trees.

"The lower regions of the valley lay in mist, which the sun had not yet had power to dispel; but the higher parts of the valley and the snowy mountains beyond were gloriously illuminated. The image of my father rose before my mind, and I remembered him, as I had often seen him at this hour of the Sabbath, taking his simple breakfast, while he meditated on that portion of Scripture on which he proposed to speak during the day: musing, yet not morosely, not austerely; for he would frequently communicate his thoughts to me and to Madame d'Esten, and thus prepare us for what we were to hear from the pulpit. I then in fancy followed him to his church, beheld his benignant smile shed on his assembled people, saw his humble courtesies, and heard his tender pleadings with the sinner, remembering again many of his delightful and cheerful statements of the love of the Redeemer and the happiness of the redeemed, and saw afresh his look of paternal love when by chance his eye fell upon his daughter. These recollections were indescribably bitter to me; and I wept so abundantly, that I was glad to plead a headache, to account for my non-appearance in the saloon, where the party generally spent the morning at the billiard-table, at tric trac, or in some such trifles as are invented for the destruction of time, by those who do not recollect, that he who kills time may at last be found to have extended the sentence of death, as far as he is concerned, even into eternity. For if time be not redeemed, eternity must remain without hope.

"My husband seemed affected with my indisposition, (for I was then very dear to him, and it was my own fault that I did not fix his regard. Oh, I was in this respect most dreadfully faulty! but, alas! in what relation of life

have I not been so?) He acquiesced therefore in my remaining quietly in my room all the morning; but at dinner-time he persuaded me to join the party, and as I had a culpable backwardness in telling him wherefore I wished to be alone, he had the less difficulty in inducing me to submit.

"As I looked pale when I appeared, a vast deal of sympathy, too great for the occasion, was expressed; and during the rest of the evening, the duke and his sister devoted themselves entirely to me, and by their whispered flatteries rendered this perhaps the most dangerous evening I had spent at the lodge.

"At the end of this same week, we all left the valley, and spent our next Sabbath at a beautiful village on the Lake of Geneva. There we parted; the duke and his sister proceeding over the Simplon to Rome; the rest of our companions passing over into France; and my husband, with me, proceeding through the Hauenstein into the German territories, where we purposed to linger a while, taking occasion to see all that was worthy of notice in that part of the world.

"Gay as I had been at the lodge, I certainly found a relief to my spirits as I became more distant from all that could remind me of home; my conscience became more insensible, and I found more amusement for my thoughts.

"We stayed some time at Baden, Carlsruhe, Cologne, and several other places, where the comte met with acquaintance. In these towns we took lodgings, and commonly dined in public, spending many of our evenings at the theatre, and in other public places. It was at Cologne, however, that I first began to perceive some defects in my husband which I had little suspected, and which, when discovered, I made no attempts to correct, but rather increased by my own imperious carriage.

"The comte was evidently not a man of good temper. This first appeared towards his servants, and then to me. He was frequently peevish, and inclined to jealousy and suspicion. He was also too fond of games of hazard, as is too much the case with his countrymen in general. This I might have observed at the lodge; but it was not till we reached Cologne, where he found some old companions, that he began to leave me in an evening to indulge this dangerous propensity.

"It would have been the endeavour of a good wife to have drawn him by gentle methods from this dangerous society: but I had no idea of winning by such means. The Duke de Nemours had told me that the comte might consider himself a most fortunate man in having seen me first, and thus having possessed the opportunity of carrying away the prize—insinuating, that, had he first seen me, it should not have been so. These were mere words of course, and would not have been uttered to a woman whom the duke had respected; but they tallied so entirely with an opinion which I had myself conceived, after I had been a few days at the lodge, that they sunk deeply into my heart, and there operated like subtle and deadly poison. With this opinion of myself, I was prepared to resent every thing like neglect on the part of my husband; and this was the occasion of our first disagreement at Cologne.

"This disagreement, however, and several others, passed over without any very evident diminution of regard, though I believe that quarrels between married persons always tend to lessen affection. We proceeded in some degree comfortably together till our arrival in Paris, which was at the end of about six months after our marriage.

"It was the spring time, and as yet not very hot, when we took possession of the Hotel de B——, which my husband then owned, a large and elegant house in the Fauxbourgh St. Honoré, the back of which looked towards the Champs Elysees. The house stood far back in a square court, surrounded by offices, and fronted towards the street by a high gateway with a porter's lodge.

"I was not at this period quite so great a novice as to be much surprised at the magnificence of the suite of state-rooms on the first floor, through which my husband led me to my own apartments in the left wing of the house; his own, according to the French custom, being distinct from mine, in the right. My apartments, however, consisted of four handsome rooms, beyond which were the chambers of my women, for there were three devoted to my service. The comte also informed me that a carriage and horses, with two or three men-servants, were to be entirely at my disposal. And thus I presently found myself established in a manner which I had scarcely ventured

to imagine, even in my most ambitious dreams, when residing under my parent's roof.

"My husband, during our travels, had given me some insight into the state of his own family and their origin. His father's family, he said, were anciently of Navarre, and of the Reformed Religion, much attached to the royal family. One of his ancestors had been a companion of the youth of Henry the Fourth, and his faithful friend under all the storms of early life: in consequence of which, that prince, when wielding the sceptre of France, had enabled him by his bounties to procure the lands of Barfleur, from which the family took their title. These lands and honours had descended in a direct line to his uncle, by whom he had been educated, and who, when dying, had left them to him as the rightful heir. His father, he added, possessed a small estate near Pau, and had there married and died in a happy and peaceful retirement, leaving his possessions to his widow, who still resided there with an only daughter, a widow also. Of both these ladies he spoke in the highest terms, adding, that they would not love me the less on being assured that I was of the Reformed Communion.

"'Not only am I in my heart of the Reformed Church,' I replied, 'but actually belonging to it: for you cannot suppose, my dear Theodore, that I could ever be induced to embrace the absurdities of popery after having seen religion divested of all its pompous and superstitious practices.'

"It was in Germany, in one of the protestant states, where this conversation took place; and my husband smilingly replied, 'Think what you will, Estelle, and be what you will in your own chamber; for as long as you do not obtrude your opinions upon others, no one will interfere with you. There is much liberality of this kind now in Paris: even were you to confess that you had no religion at all, none would find fault with you. Only avoid, I beseech you, any public statement of your sentiments; it would be drawing down opposition on yourself, and be putting us to inconvenience.'

"'But surely,' I said, 'you do not think religion a matter of total indifference?'

"'Perhaps I think as much about it as you do,' was his reply. 'At any rate, had your interest in these mat-

ters been very great, you would not have postponed this enquiry after my sentiments, till so many months after our marriage.'

"I was vexed and angry at the turn which was given to this conversation, and no doubt shewed that I was so, for I felt my cheeks glow with shame.

"'What!' he said, 'are you displeased, my Estelle, at this remark? I confess that it was a home thrust, but I must say I am glad that you did not, during the days of courtship, sift me too closely on the subject of religion. I was often afraid, I own, of some enquiries on this head, and was thankful that it did not then happen to occur to you that piety was a necessary qualification in the husband of a pastor's daughter.' So saying, he turned on his heel, and quitted the room, leaving my own reflections to be my companions.

"But to return to Paris, and my establishment there. We were no sooner settled in our new abode than we were involved in one continued round of dissipation. All the friends of the comte, and many who knew little more of him than his name, poured in upon us. My history was told in every circle, with added circumstances of romance. The most celebrated artists pressed forward to be permitted to take my likeness: and my picture was every where to be seen in the character of the Estelle of Florian. The beautiful dauphiness, the unfortunate daughter of Maria Theresa, had scarcely then commenced that career of splendid gaiety which, at this time, renders her the admiration of one party, and the suspected object of another. My rank entitled me to be presented to her; and at this presentation she received me with peculiar affability, and expressed her opinion to those about her, that report had not deceived her respecting me, at the same time saying that I was worthy of a higher rank than that to which I had been thus unexpectedly raised.

"All this inflated my vanity, and hastened on those follies which terminated in my temporal ruin.

"During the summer months, the fashionable company left Paris, and there was some little cessation of follies. Towards the end of this period, I was confined to my apartments for some time by a slight illness; and before I could again appear in public, I was blessed in the birth of a son, to whom we gave the name of Theo-

dore. All that was tender in my nature was excited by this infant. O, what resolutions did I make during the first few happy days after his birth, of renouncing all the empty pleasures of vain society, and of devoting myself to the care of this beautiful little creature! But, unfortunately, it was supposed, after a few days, that I was of too delicate a constitution to nurse my babe myself; and though I pleaded that I never remembered having had a day's illness in my life, that I but a few months past could climb the steepest hills without fatigue, and that I inherited every other symptom of the strongest health, the decision went against me, and my boy was committed to the care of a hireling, though not taken from the house.

"Being thus deprived of the endearments of my child, and finding that he became every day more and more attached to his nurse, my mind again turned to other objects; and by the time that Paris was completely filled again, I was prepared to enter with new ardour, and with unimpaired bloom, into all the vapid pleasures of this gay and licentious city.

"It would seem that the people of Paris have nothing at all to do on the face of the earth but to amuse themselves; and their amusements are so extremely childish, so thoroughly insipid, so perfectly uninteresting in themselves, that a serious person must necessarily enquire what can possibly give a zest to such frequent repetition of buffoonery. The French are not a stupid, nor even an ignorant nation, when compared with many others: how then is it possible that multitudes of them should proceed, from year to year, from youth to manhood, from manhood to old age, in one continued round of vapid amusements, some of which are too light and trifling even to amuse a child at a common fete? How is this mystery to be solved, or where are we to find the solution of this enigma? Alas! I am but too well enabled to give the explanation. It is the love of admiration, the desire of being brought forward to the notice of the other sex, which gives the power to these enjoyments, and deadens the natural affections of the wife and mother; giving an interest to scenes which otherwise could not please for a moment. Were marriage held in higher reverence in France, the matrons would be seen no longer in the gar-

dens of midnight carousal, in the ball-room, or the theatre, and many solitary *domiciles* would become the seat of domestic happiness, and the nursery of domestic virtues. Vanity, and the desire of admiration, is the secret spring of all these follies; and it was vanity, and vanity only, which led me, though reluctantly, to give up my child to a hireling in the first instance, and in the second, to abandon, every evening, that home where I might at least have provided for his comforts, and seen that all his wants were duly attended to.

"In proportion as I entered more and more into gaiety, my husband acquired the habit of seeking his own pleasures more independently of me. Had he always been assured of finding me at home on his return from any engagement, he would have been induced to come home sooner, and stay there longer; had he always found me ready to administer to his comfort, which I should have done had I attended to my duty, he might seldom have left me, and my good qualities might have held that heart which had been attracted by the unimportant advantages of mere external comeliness. But there were no attractions of this kind in the house of my husband, and there can be but little wonder if, young, and thoughtless, and unfixed in principles as he then was, he should, after a while, become perfectly indifferent to a woman who had never evinced any good qualities as a daughter, a wife, or a mother.

"In the mean time I pursued my wild career of gaiety, became lavish in my expences, and though not absolutely what the world would call criminal, yet pleased with flattery, and constantly followed by a crowd of young men, who sought to obtain that regard from me, which I ought only to have possessed for him to whom I owed the duties of a wife.

"While pursuing this perpetual round of heartless gaiety, it cannot be supposed that religion had much hold of my thoughts. I had no opportunities of attendance on divine worship in public; and I very soon totally neglected all attention to it in private. From day to day I became more averse to the recollection of it, and by degrees such an insensibility obtained over my heart, that my conscience entirely ceased after a while to reprove me for my neglect of the outward forms.

"Another year passed away, and my state of mind proceeded from bad to worse; while I was gradually declining in the esteem of my husband, rendering myself less and less necessary to his happiness, injuring my reputation, and contracting heavy debts.

"At the end of this year, another addition to our family was expected; and as I expressed no desire whatever to perform the part of a mother to this infant, my husband, with my permission, wrote to his mother in Navarre, requesting her to send up a suitable nurse for the child.

"I was certainly amazed at this piece of foresight in my husband, and, without opposing the measure, I enquired if it were necessary to send so far for a nurse, and whether there were not many to be had in the provinces much nearer the capital.

"He replied, that he had reasons for what he did, and these reasons presently appeared; for shortly after the birth of our second son, he informed me, that it was his intention to send both the children to his mother and sister at Pau.

"I was astonished and offended at this proposal, but felt it not as a mother. However, I took upon me to oppose the measure with violence; nevertheless, as the comte, when excited, was fully as determined as myself, my infant children, the little Theodore and Theophilus, were sent away from their parents' roof, when the younger was barely old enough to sustain the journey.

"I had deserved this. I was not to be pitied; and my husband had judged well: but it was such a breaking up of domestic union as even I, hardened as I was, could not but feel, though I then little thought that the parents and children who were then together, would never again be all assembled on earth. For the visitation which was approaching the hardened mother, neither slumbered nor slept; and though the dark clouds of divine displeasure had not yet totally excluded the sunshine of prosperity, yet I might have beheld those clouds on the verge of my horizon, and should have trembled at the lightnings with which they were charged. And yet in wrath the Lord remembers mercy. My little fair ones, to whom I had refused to act the part of a mother, were not to be left destitute. Another and a better home was

prepared for them, and another and a better mother. Ah! my children! Yet who have I to blame but myself?

"As the carriage, which was conveying our infant children from our presence, passed the court and through the gateway, my husband and I were left standing in the portico at the entrance of the hall. We both, as if inspired with one feeling, remained fixed till we could distinguish the sound of the carriage no longer; after which we turned to each other, and I was about to speak, and to accuse my husband of cruelty, when, surveying me from head to foot, while a sarcastic smile appeared on his countenance, he moved suddenly round, and walked off towards that side of the house which contained his apartments. There was a contempt and indifference in his manner which touched me to the quick; and, being overcome with a variety of miserable feelings, I hastened up the magnificent staircase from the hall, and rushed through my own room into the apartment which had been vacated by my children and their nurses. There, in the midst of that forsaken chamber, I stood and looked around me, as if desirous of cherishing my grief. There were my children's beds, and on that pillow was the impression of my infant's head. There was a little bowl of milk and bread, and the very spoon with which my little Theodore had been playing while his nurse was feeding him. A rose of lace lay on the table, it had been taken from the cap of Theophilus; and near the table stood the empty cradle. What my feelings were at that moment I cannot describe; my head throbbed and grew dizzy, and had not a profusion of tears relieved me, I should probably have fainted. Nevertheless, my sorrow was of short duration. I was engaged that evening to a splendid assembly. I had appointed a meeting with a milliner, about my dress. Some disappointment took place respecting a trimming on which I had set my heart; and this little irritation caused such a diversion in my feelings, that before sunset I had entirely recovered my spirits, and was fully prepared, when I next met my husband at dinner, to repay his scornful looks with interest.

"I was not, however, so much hardened, as to hear without pleasure of the safe arrival of my children at

Pau, and of their improved health and appearance from the change of air. From that period, I was engaged in little else but one continued round of dissipation; while the coldness between myself and my husband became so decided, that we seldom met except in company, and knew as little of each other's movements as if we had been absolute strangers.

"My little beloved ones had been at Pau about twelve months, and I had frequently heard of them from Madame de Laurans, my husband's sister, who spoke of them with all the enthusiasm and affection of the most tender mother; and I was perfectly satisfied with their being in such careful hands, anxious only as it regarded myself to pursue that mode of life which I had chosen.

"I have mentioned more than once the careless manner in which I had incurred various debts after my arrival at Paris. Memorandums of these debts had been sent to me from time to time, to which I paid no attention whatever; till my creditors becoming impatient, at length sent their bills to the comte: and I was in consequence summoned one morning into his library, not only to receive his reproaches, which were very bitter, but also to be informed, that he was resolved to send me, without loss of time or delay, to his mother in Navarre.

"Among other severe reflections, he failed not on this occasion to remind me of my humble birth and the obscurity of my education, together with the circumstance of my having brought him no fortune; reproaching me at the same time with my carelessness as a mother, and want of affection as a wife.

"It was in vain for me to attempt to shake his purpose of sending me into retirement, no man was more firm than the comte when once resolved; and I was dismissed his presence, with a command to be prepared for my journey the next morning.

"I spent the whole of that night in weeping; but early in the morning the travelling carriage was ready, and my husband prepared to hand me into it, which he did, with a coolness that entirely deprived me even of the power of expostulation. As the carriage was about to move, he, however, told me that I should probably meet his sister at Toulouse: a circumstance which gave me some satisfaction; at the same time that it proves to me that this

plan of banishing me from Paris had not been suddenly adopted.

"The few first days of my journey were exceedingly wretched. I was leaving Paris in the spring of the year, precisely at the time when it abounds with the greatest variety of pleasures, and at a period of my life in which I believed my external charms were at their highest perfection. I was ignorant also of the intended term of my banishment; I was highly incensed at my husband; and thought that I had been used with indignity, in having no other companions of my journey than my maid and an old valet de chambre, who seemed to possess more of my husband's confidence than I could boast. I cried, railed, and bemoaned myself, without intermission, till we arrived at Toulouse, where I expected to meet my sister-in-law, and did not allow myself to derive the slightest comfort, even from the prospect of beholding my little infants.

"Ah! what would I now give for the opportunities I then had? I refer to the opportunities of restoring a reputation which was not then past recovery; the hope of seeing my children, and enjoying their presence; the chances of reconciliation with my husband, which I then had; the means of obtaining the regard of his excellent mother and sister; and of becoming the happy wife and parent I now can never be. But I valued not the blessings which were then within my reach; I preferred infamy to virtue; and I have received my reward. But I will not anticipate: too soon will the horrors of my tale unfold themselves, and too soon shall I appear to be what indeed I am, the most perversely wicked and abandoned of the human race.

"At Toulouse I met not Madame de Laurans as I had expected, a slight indisposition had prevented her from undertaking the journey; but lest I should be disappointed, she had sent an old servant of the family, a discreet and grey-headed man, to conduct me to the end of my journey, to apprize me of the welfare of my children, and to assure me of a joyful reception.

"After leaving Toulouse, I became more tranquil in my mind; and in proportion as I approached nearer my children, I began to think of them with more affection.

"It was in the neighbourhood of Toulouse that I first

obtained a clear view of the Pyrenees: but when I arrived at Tarbes I was deeply affected; for here I beheld again all those pleasing features in the landscape which render my native country a second paradise. Here I witnessed the water pouring through the streets, and imparting that freshness and purity which were connected in my early ideas with much enjoyment. The Pyrenees indeed appear not so bold and magnificent as the mountains of Switzerland. There are fewer of the sparkling peaks which seem to pierce the very clouds; but the gentler features of a mountainous region; the green and shadowy valley, the pine crowned heights, the lively cascades, airy pasture grounds, and rocky dells, are all exhibited in equal perfection as among the Alps; and in no country in the world are the milk, the vegetables, the strawberries, and the raspberries, more delicious than in those charming regions which extend themselves at the foot of the Pyrenees.

"From Tarbes we proceeded to Pau, the birth-place of Henry the Fourth, and the former residence of the kings of Navarre. I will not do myself the injustice to say that my heart did not beat high as I approached the residence of my children, and that I did not think the passage from Tarbes particularly tedious.

"The sun was nearly set, and the evening refreshingly cool, as we approached the walls of Pau. The house of my mother-in-law and the birth-place of my husband, was without the walls of the town, situated in a line with the Esplanade. As we drew near to it, my attendant, the old steward, called my attention to certain venerable towers which formed a part of the ancient palace of the kings, a Gothic edifice crowned with small cupolas, such as I had often seen represented in old tapestry. On the opposite side was a long range of the Pyrenees, not indeed appearing in their boldest forms, but exquisitely arranged in dale and upland, intersected by numerous waterfalls, meeting together in the valley, and forming an extensive lake, which, together with the woods on the opposite banks, furnished a scene, which reminded me in no faint manner of the lovely Lake of Leman and the mountains of Savoy which I had visited with so much delight in the early part of my married life.

"This charming spot, which revived the remembrances

of past days, affected me even to tears, and I was still lost in the contemplation of them, when the carriage suddenly stopped before an old gateway, through the archway of which I beheld a formal but highly cultivated garden, and, at the end of an avenue of orange and almond trees, an old-fashioned mansion with a flight of steps leading to folding-doors, which were open. One minute brought us to the foot of the steps; and I had scarcely alighted, before a venerable lady appeared, leading a lovely child by the hand, being followed by a younger lady, who bore in her arms an infant of about sixteen months old. O, what a sight was this! Once and again I fixed my ardent gaze on each infant countenance as I ascended the steps; and I presently found myself seated on a sofa in a large old hall, and the ladies on each side of me with my lovely children in their arms.

"O! had I then possessed a humble, contrite, and broken spirit, all might have been well with me! It was not too late: I had not then lost, irretrievably lost, my husband's respect; his affections might then have been retrieved; my errors had then been comparatively venial; they had been such as the world would have forgotten. But what has been my conduct since? O! miserable, wretched, unfortunate, perverse woman that I have been! Alas! alas! my children! were not your charms, my little blooming ones, sufficient to withdraw me from the allurements of the world? What had this earth to bestow equal in attractions to your enchanting smiles, your sweet and innocent caresses? Where could I expect to see beauty like that of my lovely boys? Where could I hear music like the melting tones of your tender voices?

"The kindness, however, of my venerable mother-in-law, who still retained the traces of past beauty, and whose carriage was that of the finished gentlewoman, filled me for the moment with gratitude; and I was inexpressibly affected by the presence of my little ones. But I was less pleased with Madame de Laurans; and fancied that there was a certain severity in her manner, which made me shrink from her observation. Madame de Laurans had known many sorrows, and the effects of past afflictions still rested on her countenance. Her face was much

disfigured by the small-pox, and this circumstance undoubtedly rendered her appearance less prepossessing; yet her smile was sweet, and her eyes were expressive.

"I was much fatigued with my journey, and therefore was glad to retire to rest at an early hour. My mother and sister led me to my room, which was a large Gothic chamber at the end of a gallery; and before they took leave of me, they assured me of their regard, and expressed a hope that I should be happy with them. I expressed my sense of their kindness to my children, and told them how much I had been delighted with their appearance; adding, that although I had regretted my separation from them, I was now convinced that it had been for their good.

"'I rejoice,' replied Madame de Laurans, 'I rejoice, my sister, that you are in this way of thinking. You,' she added, 'as a daughter of a minister of the Reformed Church, must be sensible of the importance of early religious instructions, and of good examples set before children. The manners of Paris are corrupt; and it is I fear scarcely possible to educate children in humble Christian habits, in a situation where all those who surround them are more or less polluted. Its pleasures and vices,' added she, 'are a mighty vortex, which draws in all that come within its influence. I have yet seen none who have been able to escape it.'

"The look she gave me as she spoke seemed to pierce me to the heart, and I averted my eyes from her.

"My mother sighed, and took my hand. 'My daughter,' she remarked, 'speaks with emphasis, but it is because she feels what she says. O, Estelle! wife of my son, and mother of my darling little ones! there is one circumstance of my life, the remembrance of which makes me miserable. Your husband, my beloved Theodore, at ten years of age was precisely the son a mother's heart might approve, a promising, pious, lovely boy. At that time, from worldly motives, I was induced to consign him to the charge of an uncle; and what is he now? not indeed a base or dishonourable character, but not the simple Christian I hoped he would grow up to be, not the character I hope to see his sons at his age, should I be permitted to live so long. And yet,' she added, 'and yet, I have hope for my Theodore. He, indeed, knows

what is right. And if he did not honour the Christian and the Reformed Religion, would he have consigned his children to his sister's care? would he have sent them to this ancient seat of the Reformed Church, to this place where the former monarchs of Navarre maintained their simple and holy creed in the very midst of papacy? Surely this is a token for good in our beloved Theodore!'

"To all this I could make no answer: every word uttered by the old lady filled me with shame; and, when the ladies left the room, I yielded without restraint to my painful feelings.

"Had I then resolved to turn to my God, all would have been well with me, as I before observed; but although the feelings I was the subject of for some days after I arrived at Pau, were certainly similar to the fruits of penitence, yet they were not of that repentance which needeth not to be repented of.

"But ah! how my heart sinks within me, when I reflect upon that time. What happiness might I have enjoyed in Navarre, had my mind been in a humble and holy state. Especially when a short time after my arrival I received a kind letter from my husband, at least, such a letter as I might have built the hopes of a happy reconciliation upon. But such was the disposition of my heart on that occasion, his kindness rather served to raise my hopes of being speedily restored to the gay life, the exclusion from which I so much regretted, than tended to settle me in the situation to which I had been conducted.

"My recollections of Navarre produce the mingled sensations of regret, of deep regret and of pleasure, and would readily furnish subjects for volumes. How has my memory since dwelt on those days of sunshine, when my children were about me, and my mother-in-law and sister gave me every proof of sincere affection! I was from the first attached to my mother, but Madame de Laurans only pleased me after I was better acquainted with her. I had never seen true piety in a form so sweet and amiable in any females as I saw it in them. The life we led was such as would have proved infinitely sweet to one of a purer mind. We began and concluded each day with prayer. We dined together, at one o'clock; and we often spent our evenings in working and reading, in

playing with the beloved little ones, or taking them out in the old coach to visit the charming environs of Pau.

"O! what melancholy delight have I had in retracing some of those afternoons so delightfully spent, when we have alighted from our coach and wandered among the valleys of the Pyrenees, tarrying at the front of some hut to regale ourselves with wood strawberries and cream, while seated beneath the shade of some spreading tree, and witnessing the little playful tricks of our infant boys. And O, what lessons of wisdom then frequently flowed from the lips of the venerable lady and her excellent daughter! But all, all in vain were those views of domestic happiness set before me, and those words of wisdom poured into my ears. I was restless and uneasy in the situation; and the year rolled round sadly and heavily to me, while I admitted of no comfort but from the hopes of returning to Paris. These prospects, however, seemed as distant as ever: for though my husband now began to write to me with kindness, yet he never hinted at my return.

"At length, when I had been at Pau about fourteen months, the comte wrote in high spirits, to inform us that, by the death of a distant relation, he was unexpectedly entitled to a large property, a communication which filled me with ecstacy.

"'You will now write, my dear Estelle,' said my mother, 'and press our dear Theodore to leave Paris and come to us; and, henceforward, we will be but one family.'

"I know not what reply I made to this, but certainly I never meant to do as she required; for though I immediately wrote to my husband, it was to request him to recall me from banishment.

"His answer soon arrived, and it contained a cold acquiescence in my request. His letter concluded with the following paragraph: 'I am half weary of this public life, and almost disposed to give it up. I verily believe that little persuasion would now be necessary to induce me to quit Paris for ever.'

"It was necessary for me to read the former part of this letter to the ladies, in order to prepare them for my speedy return to Paris; but the latter part I kept back. However, Madame de Laurans had penetration to disco-

ver the state of her brother's mind from the few lines which I had read to her; and it was on this occasion that she spoke her mind to me in a way she had never done before. 'I plainly see,' she said, 'that Theodore might now be drawn from the world, would you but use the influence you possess. And surely,' she added, 'we have a right to expect, Estelle, that you, the daughter of a minister of the Reformed Church, ought to employ that influence in the way we could desire! You have in your own experience felt the dangers of the world; you had well nigh fallen in the situation into which you now desire again to enter: and you tremble not at these dangers; you rush into temptation with your eyes open; you uphold your husband in a mode of life which you know to be sinful; and you expect to escape unhurt! What,' added she, 'are the words of the prayer which you have been taught to repeat from infancy?—what but these—"Lead us not into temptation?" Dare you repeat that prayer, and tempt your God, as you are now about to do?'

"I felt myself highly irritated at being thus addressed, and my unholy purpose, if possible, was strengthened by it; notwithstanding which, I commanded myself, and answered with calmness, endeavouring to make it appear that I thought it my duty to use the first permission to rejoin my husband.

"'Ah, Estelle!' said Madame de Laurans, shaking her head, 'you are dealing treacherously with your conscience.'

"I was afraid that Madame de Laurans, who wrote constantly to the comte, might have influence to persuade him to revoke the permission which he had given me to return to Paris: I therefore hastened my departure, and in the hurry and agitation of my preparations had almost forgotten that I was to leave my children behind me. However, on the evening before I left Navarre, I had some returning feeling of tenderness, and, after I had supped, I stole into the room where they were sleeping. Early as it was in the year, the evening was sultry, and the large casement-window of their airy, old-fashioned apartment was open, admitting the softest and sweetest odours from flowering shrubs in the parterre beneath. The moon was at the full, and shedding its feeble light on the long range of mountains which bounded the hori-

zon. The lake was also visible in the valley, and the dark groves on its banks added variety to the charming scene. All was still in the chamber. I approached the alcove where my babies lay. They had thrown off the single sheet which covered them. Their heads were on the same pillow, and their arms around each other. They were breathing gently. I stooped and kissed them, and my tears fell upon them. The little one started in his sleep when touched by me, and his lips imperfectly uttered the word 'mamma.'

"Was it your mother you then addressed, my little angel? and was that the last, the very last time that I was to hear your lovely voice? Oh, miserable Estelle! why have my better feelings ever come too late?

"But I hasten from this scene; 'twere distraction to dwell longer on it. Suffice it to say, that by the morning dawn I had quitted Pau, and ere yet that moon had waned which had lighted me into the chamber of my children, I was again within the gates of Paris, I had again embraced my husband, and had again plunged myself in the awful vortex of intoxicating pleasures.

"I found my husband glad to see me, and in high spirits, though I evidently saw that I could easily have withdrawn him from Paris, of which he was weary.

"The first information I received from him was, that the Duke de Nemours and Madame la Marquise de Portalier were returned to France, the lady being at that time with the court at Marly, and the gentleman on some of his many estates in the provinces.

"It was then that I first coveted the honour of being one in the train of the queen, and that I began to solicit my husband to make interest for a place for me near her majesty. The comte at first did not seem to approve of my wish, but was afterwards prevailed upon by Madame de Portalier to yield to my solicitations.

"Madame de Portalier no sooner heard of my arrival than she called upon me, and expressed great satisfaction on seeing me again. The compliments she paid me were very grateful to my vanity; and she undertook to procure me the place I so earnestly desired: neither did she deceive me, for I soon received the agreeable information, that the object of my ambition was obtained.

"I pass over my first introduction at court, with other

matters of little consequence. I would observe merely, that I thought it worth my while to render myself agreeable in this grand sphere of ambition and magnificence, and that I had every reason to suppose I succeeded: for I was regarded favourably by royalty, and was in high estimation throughout the court.

"It was at that period in which the king and queen were accustomed to frequent the palace and gardens of Marly.

"Here gambling and public suppers took place every night, and it was necessary that the dress of the ladies should be splendid to an extreme. The populace were admitted into the gardens, and the display was such as might lead the imagination to suppose it was the effect of enchantment. The buildings and gardens of this fairy palace might be compared to the theatrical scenes of the opera. These gardens, of great length and breadth, extended in gentle ascent towards the pavilion of the sun, which was inhabited by the royal family, and the pavilions designated the twelve signs of the zodiac encompassed the two sides of the parterre; and all these were connected with each other by elegant vistas into which the rays of the sun could never penetrate. Lodgings were provided in these various pavilions for the princes of the blood and persons of inferior note attached to the court.

"In the great hall more than thirty tables were sumptuously supplied, for there every one lived at the expence of the king; and the entertainments of the place banished from this magnificent retreat every remembrance of a country life.

"The court dined early, and, after dinner, the queen with her ladies were drawn through the gardens and groves of the palace in sledges, surmounted by thrones richly embroidered with gold; occasionally resting our carriages under the shade of the lofty trees with which these pleasure-grounds so richly abounded, while cascades, falling over rocks of white marble, reflecting the rays of the sun, were seen through the openings of the trees, and afforded a sparkling contrast to the surrounding shades.

"This amusement was childish; and well would it have been had the evil been limited to the adorning of

our persons with feathers, flowers, jewellery, and embroidery. But the motives which carried us thus far were not so to terminate. In the sports of infancy there is no intention beyond the present amusement; but in those of adult persons, those things which meet the eye are not all the things which occupy the attention. There is a secret and deadly vanity which moves the puppets of fashion and lovers of pleasure. Pride, intrigue, ambition, and sensuality, are the hidden motives of action in all worldly societies; and they must be superficial observers indeed who cannot detect these hidden motives under the most specious coverings with which art can deck them.

"Accordingly, the evenings at Marly frequently betrayed what the mornings would have concealed. It was the constant habit of the court to meet while at this palace, at the close of the day, in the queen's saloon, a magnificent octagonal apartment, which rose in a cupola, ornamented by a balcony. There we played at pharaon and lansquenet; and here it was that I first began to barter my peace for gold, losing and winning sums of great amount.

"It may be asked, Did I find happiness in these pursuits? I answer, No: afflicted as I have since been, I would not exchange even the most disastrous and gloomy hours of my life for those I spent in that scene of false prosperity.

"In the queen's saloon at Marly, among many other sculptured groups, there was one in white marble of two sleeping infants enfolded in each other's arms. I know not whether there was any particular merit in the sculpture: but this I know, that the sight of it affected me almost to tears, and I dared not continue to look at it; and if my eye fell upon it by chance, I was instantly sensible of such a depression in my spirits as I could not describe.

"In the mean time there was not a single person in the court for whom I had felt the smallest regard but Madame de Portalier, and my regard for this lady was so entirely devoid of esteem, that it was any thing but sincere, for the more I saw of her the less I valued her character; for she was intriguing, vain, eager for admiration notwithstanding her age, and corrupt in every

principle. Still, however, I was flattered by her caresses, and intoxicated by the reports she continually brought to me concerning the effect produced by my appearance in society.

"My residence at court seldom continued longer than a week at a time, and I think it was during my second attendance on the queen at Marly, that I first met the Duke de Nemours after his return from Italy.

"It was in the early part of the day, and I was sitting in the shade near the marble fountain when he unexpectedly made his appearance. He was elegantly dressed; and though several years had passed since I had seen him, it seemed as if time had stood still with him, for there was not the slightest change in his appearance.

"He expressed great pleasure in seeing me, and much vain conversation passed between us. From that period, while I remained with the court we were constantly together; and on my return to Paris this intimacy was continued, while my intercourse with his sister became more and more frequent.

"Madame de Portalier did not reside with her brother in Paris, but occupied a large house of her own, in which she saw much company, and gave many splendid entertainments.

"The comte did not at first appear to take any notice of this close intimacy between me and Madame de Portalier, but after a while he remonstrated with me, giving me certain hints by which I might understand that her reputation, notwithstanding the favour in which she stood at court, was not precisely such as entitled her to be the guide of one so young as I was.

"To this caution I paid no further attention, than to withdraw my connexion with the marquise somewhat more from the view of the world; and I was even so imprudent as to state to her, that my husband was jealous of her, and fancied that I preferred her company to his.

"I could say much on this part of my life, but I purposely hasten over it; my heart sickens at the remembrance of my folly, my madness, and my wickedness.

"Another year passed away after my return from Navarre; in that interval I had again involved myself in debt, and was become a deep, though in general a successful, gambler.

"The spring appeared, and I again visited Marly. The Duke de Nemours was there, and constantly with me; a circumstance, which the freedom of manners then prevailing in Paris prevented any person from blaming as it deserved.

"On the evening previous to the day in which I was to return to Paris, I was deeply engaged in play with a gentleman who, no doubt, subsisted by gambling. I was at first successful, and my success made me rash; and I sat till I had not only lost all I had gained, but had involved myself in a debt on which I trembled to think.

"I had no means of defraying this debt, and I was compelled to give the gentleman a note acknowledging my debt, with a promise of speedy payment.

"Madame de Portalier had observed what passed, for she had been standing behind my chair; and as soon as the company dispersed, I hastened to her apartment, and, bursting into tears, confessed my folly and my painful apprehensions. 'Can I,' I asked, 'demand this money from my husband? No, I dare not. But must I leave that disgraceful memorial standing against me?' And such were my feelings, such the reproaches of my conscience, such my terror, that I nearly fainted.

"Madame de Portalier tried to console me, but she offered me no advice which promised succour; I therefore returned to my chamber, and spent the night in tears. In the morning, however, a letter was put into my hands, it was from the Duke de Nemours, and informed me that he had redeemed my pledge from my adversary of the past night; and he desired I might feel no uneasiness on the subject. My first emotions on this occasion were those of unmingled delight; but there was a deduction from my happiness, when I recollected that the debt I now owed the duke was not an imaginary one, which the laws of false honour only could render valid, but a solid and substantial one: for how had my pledge been redeemed, but by a heavy disbursement? Weighed down with this feeling, I hastened to the chamber of the marquise, and there found her conversing with her brother.

"I scarcely recollect what passed on this occasion. I was at first excessively afflicted, but the duke and his sister contrived to comfort me: and before we parted, they

exacted a promise from me that I would be present that evening at an assembly in the house of the marquise in Paris; the marquise being more anxious to see me on that occasion, as she was about to leave the metropolis for a short time with her brother, who was proceeding the next morning to an estate which he possessed in Alsace.

"It was about noon when I arrived at the door of my own house in Paris; and, being admitted, was hastening to my own apartments in no very easy state of mind, when I was accosted by my husband's confidential servant before mentioned, and informed that the comte desired to speak with me. My heart was agitated as I followed him into the library; and my apprehensions were by no means diminished, when I saw my husband seated at a table examining certain memorandums which were spread before him.

"On seeing me, he turned pale with passion, and, holding before me a calculation which he had been making from these various memorandums, he bid me prepare for a second visit to Pau.

"'It is necessary, Madame,' he said, 'to put it out of your power to ruin me. Behold the amount of your bills, at least of some of them, for probably you have other debts with which I am not acquainted. But I forbear to reason or expostulate. The day after to-morrow you will be in readiness to quit this place; in the mean time, you do not leave this house.'

"'I am willing to go,' I replied, with suppressed indignation. 'I shall be ready at the appointed time: but this evening I am engaged, and I must go from home.'

"'Do as you please, Madame,' he replied: 'but understand this, if you once leave these gates, without my sanction, you return no more.'

"'Be it so,' I replied, in high displeasure; and I quitted the room without a single attempt at self-justification, or deprecation of the just displeasure of my offended husband.

"I had not the smallest idea that my husband would put his threat into execution, respecting the closing of his gates against me. I therefore resolved to keep my appointment with Madame de Portalier: for I was anx-

ious to relate my present distress to her, and to entreat the duke to conceal my secret respecting the debt.

"I know not how the rest of that miserable day passed. At length the evening came, and the hour appointed for my visit to the marquise. I saw my husband no more that day: I heard his voice, indeed, but I saw him no more at that time, nor ever. Our last meeting was in anger; we never met again. Ah! unhappy Theodore! With a better wife what might he have been? He was once inexpressibly dear to me! He is now dear to me! How shall I ever compensate for the wrongs I have done him?

"Many say of vice, that she has power to bestow some happy moments on her votaries. If so, if this be true, how have I been cheated! for, through all the long, the mad, the sinful career, which I have run, were every hour laid out as upon a dial, I could not place my finger on one, the smallest, partition of time, and say that was a pleasant moment. Bitterness and sorrow, dread and self-reproach, have accompanied me through every step; and remorse has ever gnawed my heart, even when my countenance has been enlivened with worldly success, and my ear has vibrated with the accents of human praise.

"But to proceed with my dreadful narrative. I went to the marquise's. I was present at the assembly. I conversed with the duke, and represented my husband to him as a tyrant. I received his assurances of unaltered friendship, and fidelity to his trust, for I had a secret in his keeping, and I took a tender leave of the marquise in his presence. After which, I returned home in my own carriage, but the gates were shut against me; and in the moment of high indignation, I ordered my coachman to drive back to the marquise's, thus for ever closing those gates against me where only I could have found protection.

"Having already deviated so far from the path of duty, and wandered so widely in the ways of folly, no one can wonder at the step which followed next; nor will it occasion the smallest surprise to any who may read this narrative, to be informed that I yielded to the solicitations of Madame de Portalier and the Duke de Nemours, and, in a high fit of resentment against my

husband, gave way to their persuasion to accompany them into Alsace, where I was soon convinced that there was an end of every hope of entering again into the society of those who retained the slightest value for public reputation.

"It was not till I was at a considerable distance from Paris, that I was sufficiently calm to consider what I had done. During this interval I had done nothing but weep, treating all attempts of my companions to reconcile me to my situation with petulance and ill-humour, scarcely refraining from uttering reproaches, and charging them as the sole cause of my folly. Once or twice I perceived that the duke had some difficulty in repressing his anger on the occasion, for his colour heightened and his eyes flashed with displeasure, impressing me with the conviction, that it would be necessary, as I had placed myself in his power, to use more command over my temper towards him than I had ever done with the husband whom I had represented to myself and others as an imperious tyrant. I therefore strove to do so, and endeavoured, during the rest of my journey, to conceal my unhappy tempers, and render myself more agreeable to the company, entertaining the delusive hope, that the course which I had taken was not irremediable; and that I might so account for it to the comte, whom I resolved to address by letter at the end of the journey, as might occasion it to pass for a frolic, and induce him to look over it.

"Indulging these hopes, I again became more cheerful, while the transient displeasure of the duke passed away and yielded to his usually polite and engaging manner.

"Our journey was effected with speed, though I was considerably fatigued when we entered Alsace; and having traversed a great portion of that charming country, we, at length, arrived at an ancient castle on the banks of the Rhine. This castle being so near the frontiers had been strongly fortified, though its fortifications were now falling to decay. It was situated on the summit of a rock which hung frowningly over the river.

"Our approach to the castle was through a long avenue formed in a very deep and thick set forest; and near the gates, we passed through one of those ancient and grotesque villages with which the banks of the Rhine

commonly abound. The houses were in general larger than those we see in the villages of France, built on frame-work of timber, with large porches, and each story hanging over that beneath. The coverings of each house were of thatch, and the outside walls generally painted of different colours, so as to produce an extraordinary effect. There was a gradual ascent from the entrance of the village up to the gateway of the castle. An ancient Gothic archway surmounted by a tower and flanked by gigantic figures of stone, fixed in niches in the wall on either side this gateway, seemed to yawn portentously upon us.

"The wearied horses (for we had travelled far that morning) dragged the carriage heavily up the ascent, and gave the villagers time to assemble in crowds to welcome their lord. At length we came upon a drawbridge, by which we crossed the castle-ditch, and, having passed beneath the archway, we were quickly within the court of the castle. This court is encircled by high embattled walls, and many wide chambers, some of which appeared to be inhabited, while others were evidently deserted, the windows, which were grated with iron, having no glass. I was looking up to the lofty chambers and towers which rose above us, when the duke, who had rode the last stage, came to hand me from the carriage, using some such compliment as the occasion might be supposed to suggest to a mind like his.

"Assisted by his hand, I left the carriage, and was led through a large hall, terminated at each end by a magnificent staircase, into a saloon of great extent, at the end of which a large projecting window hung over the precipice on the eastern side of the castle. This saloon was of stone, richly adorned with Gothic carvings in high preservation, the floor being paved with marble: and though the morning was extremely hot, a pleasing coolness pervaded the whole apartment; while the sound of waters rushing from a precipice near at hand rendered the retreat exceedingly delightful.

"The duke had dispatched a courier, several days before, to inform his people of the hour of our arrival: in consequence, a cold collation was set out in the centre of this hall, in a style of such superior elegance as I had seldom seen beyond the precincts of Paris.

"Through this enchanting apartment the duke led me to the window; and again expressing his pleasure in seeing me at this place, he referred to the various beauties of the scenery.

"Full as I was, at that moment, of painful thoughts, I was filled with amazement at the prospect which was unfolded from this exalted station. I was standing on an eminence of two hundred feet at least from the river, the precipice beneath being in some places nearly abrupt, and affording scarcely the space for the public road, which wound between the rocks and the bed of the Rhine. On the right hand the rocks formed a segment of a circle, and came round so as to be almost opposite to one wing of the castle. These rocks were rough and rugged, their shelving parts being clothed with trees, and affording nourishment to innumerable saxifrages, which hung in tangled festoons from the heights. From a cavern near the summit gushed a pure spring of sparkling water, which, dashing and foaming with a loud noise from one declivity to another, at length mingled in the waters of the river, and communicated its agitation in a wide circle, marked by foam, and carefully avoided by the experienced waterman. Many wild traditions, as I afterwards found, were connected with this cavern and waterfall; but it was not when I first beheld it that this doleful legend was related to me. On the opposite shores of the Rhine, whose waters there formed a wide channel between the rocks, arose a hill of slate, covered with vines, and crowned by a dark forest, from the centre of which arose a single tower in ruins, said to have been Roman, but, most certainly, of great antiquity.

"I know not how it is, but I scarcely remember the time in which the beauties of nature have not affected my mind with melancholy feelings and sad forebodings. I will not now pause to analyze these feelings: they were, however, on this occasion, certainly evident to the duke, who was a sagacious discerner of the human countenance, for he immediately led me from the window, and took me to the breakfast-table, where he diverted my attention by the cheerfulness of his manner, and the refinement of his conversation. Addressing himself to Madame de Portalier, he spoke of the neighbourhood, which he said was occupied by many agreeable families, of various schemes

of pleasure on the water, of a theatre which the house contained, of theatrical amusements which he resolved to get up, of rural balls and concerts, and of his large and well-selected library. Of the particulars of this conversation I, however, heard little; I had other thoughts in my mind; and these thoughts, though arrived too late, were undoubtedly tending to good.

"Immediately after breakfast, Madame Portalier withdrew with me from the saloon; and having received some directions from her brother, led me up the staircase on the eastern side of the hall, and through a long gallery above into a superb suite of apartments, which, opening one into another by lofty folding-doors, terminated in the east by a large Gothic window. These apartments were all hung with arras, and richly adorned with vases of china, superb furniture, and groups of sculpture. The first of these was a sitting-room, and commanded the same prospect which I had seen from the saloon; the second was a sleeping apartment; and the third contained two light closets, a dressing-room, and a superb toilet, where we found two women in attendance, who were to be considered as my own servants. I cast a hasty glance at these persons, who were no other than the women who acted as my tormentors and avenging angels in my rejected condition; but they were then all obsequiousness, and their features clothed with the smile of servility.

"I was somewhat startled at beholding such arrangements made for me; and as I walked towards the Gothic window before mentioned, I said to Madame de Portalier, in a manner as careless as I could affect, 'You are giving yourself much trouble about me, Madame, and I am the more obliged, as I left home in haste and without proper comforts; but as I shall not stay long in this place, a few changes of linen from your wardrobe will supply all my wants.'

"'All I have is at your service,' replied Madame de Portalier, evincing the same coolness, 'but you will not leave this place till I return to Paris?'

"'That depends on circumstances,' I answered; 'you will probably not stay here any length of time?'

"'That must depend on circumstances, my dear Estelle,' she replied, repeating my words; 'and now,' she

added, 'I leave you to rest and refresh yourself. You will find books in your apartments and a harp, which you may not have observed; and if you are inclined for music, either of these women, who will think it an honour to serve you, are able to handle it in a manner which will surprise you.' So saying she departed, leaving me full of uneasy reflections, and disgusted with waiting-maids of such a description.

"I was standing at the Gothic window, and, to conceal my confusion and collect my thoughts, seemed wholly occupied by the charming scene there presented. This was the eastern side of the castle, and as the day was considerably advanced, it was thrown into deep shade by means of the towers and walls of the castle. Beneath the window in the fore-ground, was a rugged scene of rocks and fragments of the old building mingled together in a confused mass, and covered with moss; and beyond these were the woodlands, deep, dark, and shadowy, though the upper branches of the trees were illuminated with the light of the midday sun. Beyond these woods was an open country, through which I could in many places mark the course of the Rhine; and the remote horizon was indented by the summits of hills, some of which I concluded might form a portion of the Hartzwald.

"My observations on this landscape, though mentioned in this place, were not made at the time I speak of; for though I stood looking out of the window, my whole thoughts were occupied by other things, and those very different from the objects before me. Having at length formed my resolution, I withdrew to the outer apartment; and, seeing a writing-table duly fitted out, I sat down and wrote to my husband, entreating his pardon for my hasty conduct, speaking of what I had done as a mere frolic, though a very silly one, saying I was ready to return to him or to go to Navarre the moment he would send me remittances for the purpose, and giving him every possible assurance of my future submission to his will.

"Having sealed up this letter, I wrote a second to Madame de Laurans much to the same purpose; and having prepared them both, I requested my attendants to give them to the person who was in the habit of carrying the duke's letters, not having at that time any suspicions of the deep treachery of the persons who surrounded me.

"When the letters were dispatched, I felt my mind considerably relieved, and I was enabled to attend to the engagements of the toilet, in which I had always delighted.

"It was the decline of day when I was summoned to dinner, and I appeared in the saloon, where the dinner-table was spread, in better spirits than I had enjoyed since I left Paris. The duke and his sister were deeply occupied in conversation near the window when I entered the room. Their discourse suddenly broke up on my appearance, and as the duke came forward to hand me to the table he said, 'I am glad to see you have so much recovered the fatigues of your journey, Madame.'

"I was startled at the tone of voice with which these words were spoken, and, looking towards the speaker, instantly observed such a cloud on his countenance as made me tremble. However, I resolved not to notice what I had observed, and I began to talk with Madame de Portalier. The beauty of the place afforded a natural subject of observation, and the duke remarked, that it was his favourite residence, that he meant to remain there till the end of autumn, and to spend his winter in Italy; and then, turning suddenly to me, asked me how I should like to see Rome.

"'Very much,' I replied, 'but I have no chance of doing so.'

"'How!' he answered, 'cannot you accompany me and my sister?'

"'No,' I replied, 'I cannot be so long from home; I shall want to see my children: I think of going shortly to Pau.'

"As I uttered these last words, the duke coloured deeply, and seemed to find some difficulty in commanding himself: for, though he did not speak, he gave me a look which indicated much, though not so plainly as to enable me to judge of the whole that was passing in his mind.

"The servants were at that period removing the dinner, we therefore remained silent till they had left the room, and then I took occasion to speak to my companions to the following effect: I told them that I had been brought to a sense of my imprudent and hasty behaviour, I thanked them for their kindness, but informed them that

I was come to the resolution of imploring my husband's forgiveness, and that I should hold myself in readiness to return to him the very instant he should signify his intention to receive me. 'Or,' I added, 'should he wish me to go to his mother, I am equally ready to obey.'

"While I spoke, I avoided looking at them; indeed, I was overwhelmed with grief, and my eyes dimmed with tears; but when I ceased to speak, and no one answered, I looked up, and saw that the duke was reclining his head upon his hand, his elbow resting on the table, while Madame de Portalier had her eyes fixed on him as if to obtain a hint of the line of conduct she was to pursue respecting me.

"At length the duke raised himself and addressed me, not in invective or reproach, as I had expected, but in a strain of the highest panegyric. He called me the best of wives and of mothers, and praised me as one who was willing to sacrifice every thing for the good of her family. He hinted that my husband was a tyrant, and that my mother-in-law and her daughter were gloomy bigots. He regretted, he said, that I had fallen into such hands, and lamented that he had not seen me first, and thereby entitled himself to become the object of all those conjugal affections of which I had, he was pleased to observe, so high and exalted a notion.

"In this strain he proceeded, till my self-satisfaction was entirely restored, and the intoxicating effects of flattery were, no doubt, fully apparent.

"The rest of this day was spent in walking among the beautiful environs of the castle, in conversations on the *belles lettres*, in hearkening to music performed by some of the duke's retainers, and in other amusements of the same nature.

"During the next month I was kept in a state of constant expectation of answers to my letters; but they did not arrive. At the end of that period I wrote again both to Pau and to Paris, and sent my letters, not by the hands of my waiting-maid, but by those of a man-servant, who waited on me at dinner.

"In the mean time, the duke and his sister contrived that I should be kept in a state of constant excitement by company, parties of pleasure by land or water, theatrical amusements, and other devices. While these were

the ostensible occupations of the duke and his sister, they were secretly labouring to remove every sentiment of honour and integrity which still possessed any influence over my heart, by shaking the very foundation of my belief in the Christian Religion. Both of them were decided infidels, and to see others reduced to the same state of hopeless infidelity with themselves seemed to be the chief delight and solace of their lives, as it was of most of those with whom they associated.

"It is inconceivable with what industry they pursued their purpose, and how anxious Madame de Portalier was to bring me to that state into which she was conscious of having brought herself.

"Still, however, while awaiting the answers to my letters and while I felt some hope of being delivered from the mire in which I was sinking, I retained some degree of honour, some rectitude of character: but at length my pride exciting me, I resolved to think no more of my husband, no more of my infant children, my religion, or the days of my childhood, and I from that time became as wax, to be moulded into whatever form my vicious companions might desire.

"But Madame Portalier had no sooner brought me to renounce my husband and my children, than she instantly turned upon me, and hinting that it was her intention to return to Paris, asked me if she should execute any commissions for me at my milliner's.

"I was shocked at hearing that she was going to leave the castle, and declared that I would accompany her to Paris.

"'It cannot be,' she answered.

"'And why?' I asked.

"'You will not now be received in society.'

"'And wherefore?' I replied.

"'Because,' she said, 'you have quitted your husband.'

"'As a friend to you, and with you?' I answered.

"'True,' she replied; 'but the world has put another construction on your conduct, and there are some things that the world cannot forgive.'

"'And this from you, Madame de Portalier!' I said, 'you, my adviser and familiar friend! O, this is greatly too much!' and I shrieked with agony, and fainted.

"This scene took place in my own room; and when I recovered, I found myself lying on a sofa, and the duke and his sister standing near me. As I opened my eyes, the duke came forwards and tried to soothe me; but my indignation was excited, and I then let him see the kind of spirit he had to deal with. Violent, however, as I was, I had now encountered one who was more than my match. When thus haughtily repulsed, he stood before me, looking upon me with a determined and daring expression, indicative of contempt; and, bidding me to look back on my past life, asked me to blame no other than myself for all my misfortunes. 'Is it my fault,' he asked, 'that your husband has forsaken you, and that your children are taken from you? Was it by me that you were taken from beneath your husband's roof? or through my persuasion that you renounced his countenance and protection? You ought to have weighed the matter well, before you thus violated the laws of society and closed every avenue to your return. You have now, indeed, no friend—no protector but myself. And are you already weary of this protection? Are you determined on your own destruction?'

"I listened to him in silence, for amazement had deprived me of utterance. I now for the first time felt the chains which I had forged for myself. My proud spirit was humbled indeed, and O, how debased! The duke would have added more, for he had measured and weighed my character, and had discovered the means of taming that spirit which had never been subdued before: but rising from the sofa, I approached him with a bended knee, I implored his forgiveness, I besought his continued protection, and I promised to refrain from all future reproaches.

"He received my concessions with a haughty graciousness; and from that period I became the miserable slave of one who, had I honoured myself, would probably have ranked the daughter of the humble pastor of the mountain village among some of the fairest ornaments of her sex.

"But what am I now doing? Do I not forget myself? For whom am I compiling these miserable adventures? My head is giddy, my senses are confused. O, my Estelle! my daughter! Be this remembered by my daugh-

ter: that the influence of every virtuous woman is confessed, not only by her husband, but by all the other sex; and one of the contrary character is despised in every society with which she mingles, while she introduces distress and disorder into all her connexions, and poisons every source of relative happiness.

"On the evening of the day referred to, the duke, probably by way of a peace-offering, presented me with a superb set of jewels; but although I had already begun to lose my value for these gaudy trifles, I was obliged to receive them with an air of gratitude, and to express a degree of satisfaction which I did not feel.

"Madame de Portalier remained at the castle for nearly six weeks after the conversation had passed of which I spoke above, and during that time the amusements proceeded without interruption. At that period I accidentally heard, through the means of a visiter, that the Comte de Barfleur had left Paris and was gone to reside with his mother. What would I then have given to have been permitted to join that happy party, or only to have taken a distant view of the venerable mother with her children and grandchildren! But ah! the door of hope was shut, and my children and my husband were lost to me for ever.

"At length Madame de Portalier left us, but without taking leave of me, and with her departed all our female visiters. A few gentlemen only now frequented the castle, and now the duke began to give himself much to those pleasures in which I could take no part, and I was left alone, to reflect almost to distraction on the whole tenour of my miserable life. I saw in the past only subjects of regret and mortification, and in the future nothing but distress and horror.

"It was at this time that I endeavoured to fortify my mind in unbelief; and though assisted in this attempt by the duke, I never could succeed so far as to remove my apprehension of what was to follow after death.

"I seldom breakfasted with the duke, and how at this time I wasted my weary mornings it is difficult to describe. Sometimes I allowed my attendants to talk to me, but their conversation was utterly detestable to me. I could not endure their flatteries, and I abhorred still more their sentiments. If I treated them with scorn, that

scorn has been repaid with interest. Sometimes I would beguile an hour or two in reading, while one of my attendants played to me on the harp, and oftener I sat meditating at the window, watching the progress of the boats on the bosom of the Rhine, or the variations of the lights and shades upon the woods. Sometimes I would contemplate for hours together the figures on the tapestry, and particularly a group which represented the parting of Hector and Andromache, until the infant figure of Astyanax and the dutiful sorrow of the heathen matron would fill me with shame and pain, and I should be ready to sink with grief and self-reproach.

"And now, as time advanced, and autumn began to display her dark tints and cast her foliage, I looked forward with dread to approaching winter, and I began to consider whether the duke would think of removing, and what would be my fate. He at one time spoke of going to Italy, and I felt rejoiced at the idea of any change: but being engaged in some diplomatic business in a German court not very far distant, it was settled that I should remain where I was; and as his time would not be fully occupied in the affair, he resolved to give me as much of it as he conveniently could.

"I can give no adequate idea of the extreme depression which seized my spirits, when I found myself without a companion in the castle of Sphorzheim. Never perhaps till then had I felt the deep, deep wretchedness of my situation; and had I then possessed a single friend, or a few *Louis d'ors*, I verily believe that I should have left the place. It was then that my imagination first assumed that wild and vivid character which is nearly allied to insanity. I had from youth yielded to my passions. I had indulged my fancy in waking-dreams and foolish expectations, and the propensity at that period became dangerously strong.

"There was a tale allied to the cavern of which I have spoken as being visible from my window, which being told me at this time affected even my nightly visions. It was said, that before those heights were covered with wood, a certain prince, with many followers, had pursued a hart to the mouth of this cavern, and there the terrified animal had sprung from the precipice and been followed by the whole train of hunters, who had miserably perished;

and that a spring of pure water had subsequently gushed from the place on which the hart had stood at bay before it took its perilous leap.

"My mind was so filled with this tradition, that I, one night when the moon was shining full upon the cascade, fancied I beheld a train of shadowy huntsmen springing from the shelf of the rock, and even heard their groans in the wind. It was between sleeping and waking that these fancies filled my mind: but they were inexpressibly distressing, as they always, somehow or other, connected themselves with circumstances allied to me, my husband, or my children.

"'Oh! what would I now give,' I would often say, 'for one interview with my children! Does my Theophilus still lisp the word mamma? or is the sound for ever interdicted to these unhappy babes? Is the name of Estelle held in entire abhorrence by my husband? Is the mother of his children utterly detested?'

"In meditations of this nature passed the weary hours, till the duke returned and occasioned some change of thought, but little comfort; for finding me dejected, he seemed hurt, and in some degree offended, but I refrained from answering his reproaches. In his presence, however, I tried to rally my spirits, and my efforts in some degree succeeded.

"During that long sad winter, I experienced many languid hours. The duke was often absent, and I thought I observed an increasing indifference every time he returned; nevertheless, there were some intervals in which he seemed to feel my situation, and to wish to console me.

"The duke had at length finished his diplomatic duties, the spring again bloomed, and my spirits were somewhat revived; nevertheless, I had some very sad moments, and many intervals of bitter sorrow and unspeakable anguish.

"Time hastened on, and after a while my little Estelle was laid in my arms. For a season after the birth of this unhappy baby it was supposed that I should have done well, but grief had taken a deeper hold of my constitution than was at first supposed. I now earnestly sought to be allowed to nurse my child, but was obliged at length to confess my inability, and a tender-hearted peasant was procured to undertake the office. After which it was

hoped that my health would improve, but the hope was vain, the rose never returned to my cheek nor the bloom to my lips. I was seized with a shortness of breathing, and a slight cough, and was troubled with an intermitting fever which made me inexpressibly miserable. I had little to complain of respecting the duke during the summer months; he procured me the most able medical assistance, and supplied me with every comfort. In the autumn he proposed that I should remove into a warmer situation, and I accompanied him to Montpelier, where I seemed to gain some little benefit, though being uneasy about the child whom I had left with her nurse, I was glad to return in the spring to Sphorzheim. Thus a great part of another year wore away, and if I did not regain health, I did not decline.

"Immediately on my return to the castle, the duke found some pretext for going to Paris, and from that period I saw little of him till we parted to meet no more. I was no longer the companion in which he could delight. My spirits were gone, and young as I was my health was declining, although it was only then a little more than twice twelve months since we had met at the palace of Marly.

"My career was indeed a short one, but had it been longer, it would only have tended to the multiplication of offences.

"I was exactly twenty-six years of age at this time, and had, in my short life, utterly abused and forfeited every advantage of fortune and distinction in society, and was left forsaken of all the world, to watch the gradual approach of death, and, as I then thought, of everlasting destruction.

"And now, by degrees, a deep and fixed melancholy took possession of my mind, and I have no accurate recollection of the last eighteen months that I spent at Sphorzheim. Sometimes, indeed, I am inclined to think that a kind of derangement possessed me, for I knew little that passed, and every sort of terrific image presented itself to my imagination. And during this state of feelings, I have no doubt but that I exercised the forbearance of those with whom I lived in no small degree, and probably rendered myself as much an object of hatred to my attendants, as I had formerly been of envy

and admiration. But who can bear the torments of a wounded spirit? Who can be at peace beneath the vengeance of an offended God?

"At length my illness took a more decided and alarming form, and the Duke de Nemours was sent for.

"He seemed affected when apprized of my situation, and treated me in our last interviews with kindness. Yet he too readily yielded, as I then thought, to the last suggestion of my physicians, which was to send me to the place of my nativity in order to try the effect of my native air; and though I combated the proposal with all the strength I had, it was carried against me, and the plan put into execution.

"My passage was by water up the Rhine, as far as it could be managed. After which I was taken from my couch in the vessel, and put into a litter with my daughter. My attendants were the two females frequently mentioned above, and several men-servants. The duke took leave of me at the edge of the water, and kissing the infant affectionately, promised to follow me in a few days, a promise, however, which he probably never meant to keep. O! what, what were my feelings as I looked up for the last time at the towers of Sphorzheim and towards the windows of those apartments in which I had spent so many miserable hours!

"Thus I commenced my melancholy journey, and thus was I brought to my native place under circumstances of misery and degradation which it is past the power of language to describe. My distress of mind, fatigue, and even terror from the unkindness of my servants during the journey had been so great, that when I arrived at this place my fever raged with unprecedented fury; and I was in that state of feeling in which the imagination is unable to distinguish its own creations from realities.

"I have lost several days of my journey from my recollection. But when I arrived in this place I seemed to wake as it were from a very long dream, and saw again before me the many well-known objects, with which this lovely valley abounds, with sensations it would be impossible to define, and which filled me with unmixed anguish.

"Oh, sin! sin! to what hadst thou reduced me? and

what were thy wages?—Misery, misery from first to last was my doom! various, multiplied, unmixed distresses! shame and grief, and bitter anguish!

"Never, never can I forget the moment in which I was lifted from my litter and carried into that dreadful lodge; when I was laid on that bed, that bed of horror, and saw that room which reminded me of other times—the same, the very same; and yet so different, so tarnished, faded, and altered. I looked around, upward, toward the ceiling, and downward on the floor; and then uttering a wild and fearful shriek, I heard, I saw no more.

"It was night, dark night, when I opened my eyes again. A lamp was burning, and some one held a cup to my lips. I drank with eagerness, and again became insensible. I had swallowed a powerful opiate, and lay for many hours entranced in a deathlike sleep. Again I awoke, and recovering recollection, tore my hair and wrung my hands, till, being held down by force, weakness compelled me to remain still.

"A deep and gloomy silence followed, during which, my recollections, or rather the visions of my fancy, were horrible in the extreme.

"Another day and night passed away, and my eyes opened on the Sabbath, but it was no day of rest to me. The windows of the apartment were open, and I heard the village bells. I started and tried to raise myself, but a kind of paralytic numbness had seized my limbs, of which I had not been aware. I called to my attendants, and begged to be placed in such a direction that I might look through the window. It was no delicate hand which then lifted my aching head: no, I had driven far from me all those beloved connexions, whose tender endearments render a sick-bed easy.

"However, being thus raised, I could inhale a fresher air, and could distinguish through the window a part of the belt of pine, and the inferior peak of the nearest hill crowned with fir trees.

"I lay and gazed on this object during all the tedious day, and heard from time to time the distant sound of the village bells. A kind of tenderer sorrow had succeeded my high-wrought frenzy. I thought of my husband and infant boys, yet still more of my father. I revolved and again revolved these things in my mind, till all sense of

time seemed confounded with me, and the present, past, and future were one maze of confusion.

"My eyes were fixed on the peak and the grove. I remembered climbing it, with my father's help, in early childhood, and recollected the sensations which I experienced from the pure mountain breezes, and fancied I still heard the rustling of the wind among the pines. By degrees the illusion became stronger: the peak and grove neared as it were upon my vision, I thought I saw my father's figure walking among the trees; in his hand he held a child, it was myself at one moment, and then my infant daughter. For a moment the sight was pleasing to me, but presently it changed its character: the wind blew louder, the grove rocked; and in the countenance of my father and of the child I fancied a forbidding and awful aspect, which caused me to shriek with terror, and made me glad of the presence even of my cruel attendants.

"Notwithstanding, however, this dreadful wretchedness of mind, and the cruel treatment which I experienced, and on which I now forbear to expatiate, I can gratefully acknowledge that these things have tended decidedly and directly to my advantage. My state of health undoubtedly improved after my arrival at the lodge, insomuch as, after the first and second day, I had no return of the fits of frenzy, though I was still unable to rise from my couch.

"The first dawn or ray of Christian hope which broke in upon me, was occasioned by the visit of that worthy man under whose roof my weary foot has at length found rest, though I was then under such restraint that I did not dare to express my joy. From that moment I thought of nothing but how to effect my escape.

"At length I found means to procure materials for writing a note, and having seen a little shepherd boy driving his sheep across the alp, I employed my infant girl to throw my note to him from the verandah: a perilous measure indeed, but it succeeded, and the next Sabbath-day my deliverance was effected.

"What has since passed is well known to the dear friend under whose roof I have found protection, and more than protection, *peace*—peace which I never knew before even that peace which the world cannot give.

through the divine blessing, the mists of error in which I had been so long involved have been scattered from my benighted soul. I have been led to consider myself utterly vile and abominable; one who has transgressed the law in deed and word, in the spirit and the letter; a faithless daughter, wife, and mother; a shame and disgrace to my sex; one who has deserved to be an outcast from society, and the scorn of all. Nevertheless, though this has been revealed to me, and I have been led to cry, 'Unclean, unclean,' yet I have not been left as one without hope. I have been convinced that my Redeemer is mighty, and that the atonement he made is all-sufficient for my salvation. Though my offences are as scarlet, they shall be white as wool; for I know in whom I trust, and I will not be afraid. Though some sad hours, some bitter conflicts, I doubt not, remain to be experienced; yet my victory is certain, inasmuch as it depends not on myself, but on Him who said unto the leper, '*Be thou clean.*'

"And now to sum up this awful history in as few words as possible, for the hand which traces these lines already begins to feel the palsy of approaching dissolution. I here declare, that I yield my soul and body to him that fashioned them, with an entire renunciation of all self-confidence, with an utter abhorrence and detestation of my former life, and without other hope of mercy but through the merits and death of Christ. I have no expectation of being accepted of the Father but through the Son; and have no hopes of amendment of life, were my life to be prolonged to the appointed age of man, but through the restraining and sanctifying influences of God the Holy Spirit. I further add, that it is my wish that my infant daughter, my little Estelle, should henceforth consider my honoured protector, the successor of my father, as a parent; that she should be educated by him, and early taught to shun those errors which proved the ruin of her mother. To the tender care of my Almighty God, I bequeath my injured husband and beloved sons. May every blessing descend on my children—showers of blessings from above! And may we, who now can meet no more on earth, experience a joyful reunion, when time shall be no more, and the work of redeeming love shall be completed!"

"The manuscript broke off in this place, and the few last lines were scarcely legible.

"Such was the account which this unhappy lady gave of her life, and I could fill volumes with my comments on it, but I forbear. Suffice it to say, that it left an impression of sadness on my mind which never wore off. My heart clung, in a manner which I cannot describe, to the little Estelle; and I was exceedingly uneasy lest any dispute should arise, on the part of the Duke de Nemours, respecting my guardianship of this child. This matter was, however, soon and amicably settled between us. For the duke, as I afterwards found, being on the point of forming a connexion with a lady of high station and fortune, was easily persuaded to leave the child where her mother had placed her.

"Among the unhappy lady's papers, I found, after her death, two letters, the one addressed to the Comte de Barfleur, and the other to his mother. I did not think it right to read them, but dispatched them immediately to Pau, with the communication of her death, and an account of the blessed state in which she had departed.

"I certainly expected a written answer to my letter, and was therefore surprised, when after several weeks, in which nothing had been heard from Pau, the Comte de Barfleur himself was introduced into my study. I did not at first form any conjecture concerning this stranger, nor had I the least idea who he might be. I did not therefore immediately send away the little Estelle, who was sitting on a chair by my side, amusing herself with some such trifles as children love. I saw, however, by the air and manner of this gentleman, that he was no ordinary visiter, though it did not occur to me that he was so nearly related to the late unhappy Comtesse de Barfleur. But he soon informed me of his name; and told me, that, being on the borders of Switzerland when he received my letter, he had come so far to question me respecting the last hours of a lady who had once been inexpressibly dear to him. I immediately called my servant, and sent away the innocent daughter of a miserable mother, seeing that the presence of the child disturbed the comte. And when left alone we had a long and very interesting conversation together, in which the comte proved himself to be a reformed character, reformed in

the best sense of the word, viz. the Christian one. He took much blame to himself in the misfortunes of his unhappy wife; saying, that had he not exposed her to the temptations of a vicious world, young and beautiful as she was, she might have still lived and been happy, still lived to bless him and his children. 'But alas!' he added, 'though I have seen my error, it has been too late for my happiness! My wife is lost to me for ever! and my children are without a mother!'

"I said much to him respecting the desirable state in which she died, and the hopes I entertained of her present happiness. He seemed consoled by these assurances, and accepted my invitation to remain with me some days; during which, he visited the grave of his unfortunate wife, and many of those places in which he had formerly enjoyed her society.

"I parted with the comte with sorrow, and I believe that our sorrow was reciprocal. I was much affected when, on taking leave, the Comte de Barfleur asked to see the infant, and, kissing its cheek, would have forced on me a purse of gold for its use, which, however, I did not accept, being handsomely supplied with all I could require. He refused to take back the money, desiring it might be given, in the name of the departed lady, to the poor of the parish.

"Thus the Comte de Barfleur took his leave, and I never saw him more, though I have always remembered this visit with pleasure.

"And now, having given an account of this visit of the Comte de Barfleur, I close my narrative by saying, that nearly fourteen years are now past since the unhappy daughter of the pastor Claude was laid in her grave: and since that period, the young Estelle has never quitted me: while every moment which could be spared from my other duties has been devoted to the education of this lovely child.

"The younger Estelle resembles her mother in person, and is not less beautiful; though, from having been nurtured in affliction, there is a gentleness and softness in her manner, which probably never appeared in that of her mother. The sad fate of that parent seems also to have rested heavily on her heart, and, with the divine blessing, to have inspired her with a dread of that arro-

gant, independent, and self-sufficient spirit, which was the ruin of her mother.

"We had comparative peace in our lovely village till this dear child was about thirteen years of age. At that time we were driven from our home before the tide of revolutionary fury; and since that period have been wanderers in many countries, and often almost deprived of the necessaries of life. At length being arrived in England, we have obtained a peaceful asylum; and our connexions on the Continent having found means to supply our wants, we are content to wait till Providence shall point out whither next it may be best for us to remove our tent.

"In the mean time, while blessed in the presence of my lovely and affectionate child, and permitted to mark her growth in grace, to look on that lovely countenance, to behold that beauty, that noble deportment, and that elegance, which would fit her to shine as the brightest ornament of those courtly scenes in which her mother moved with such universal admiration, and yet to behold all these qualities clad in the veil of the deepest humility, and accompanied with a degree of diffidence and modesty rarely associated with the meanest pretensions, is indeed a sight to exhilarate the most dejected spirits, and to excite the highest song of praise: for what but divine power can enable a young person to triumph over the snares of sin, and to march forward heavenwards, surmounting all the stumbling-stones and rocks of offence which the world and Satan may place in her way?"

This manuscript was signed,

"ERNESTHUS WILHELM."

As the reading of the manuscript had detained the young ladies to a late hour, the lady of the manor requested them to join her in prayer as soon as it was concluded.

### *A Prayer against Temptation.*

"O BLESSED LORD and SAVIOUR, we beseech thee to keep us from every path and every situation where we may be endangered by our own evil inclinations. We feel our dangers from without to be great,

but these would be powerless, as they were with thee while on earth, if we were free from those which are within. Our own hearts are the enemies which we would chiefly dread. O, save us from ourselves. Render us deaf to the suggestions of our own vile inclinations. Turn our eyes away from beholding vanity, and our ears from hearkening to its blandishments. Fill our hearts with holy love, and draw our affections upwards to thyself, who art alone worthy of our supreme regard. Draw us, O Lord, and we will run after thee. Set us as a seal upon thy heart, a seal upon thine arm. Reveal thyself to our souls in all thy fulness; and make our feelings subordinate to those principles of love, of gratitude, and adoration, which will lead us near to thyself.

"O blessed Saviour, we lament the coldness of our hearts, the low and degraded state of our desires, and the trifling tendency of our cares. We would love thee fervently. We would be superior to temptation from earthly things, but we feel ourselves too often overcome and bowed to the dust. Ah, Lord God! who is able but thyself to deliver us from the body of this death? Thine, O Lord, is the work of our salvation. From beginning to end it is thine, and thine only. And thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, now and for evermore. Amen."